

Claire Horne  
Appleton  
LD 209

Testimony: LD 209 "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025"

Dear Senator Margaret Rotundo, Representative Drew Gattine, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

I am writing today regarding the proposed budget being discussed by the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My understanding is that this budget includes cuts to General Assistance, and I am concerned about the life-altering impacts that these cuts will have on Maine's most vulnerable communities.

I have read that Gov. Janet Mills has proposed a budget to address a \$450 million budget shortfall over the next two years that includes ruthless cuts to General Assistance (GA), the elimination of the hardship exemption for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefit programs for non-citizens. I am deeply concerned that because of these changes, non-citizens who have a work permit but are not employed would lose eligibility for SNAP or TANF.

So many Mainers are just trying to make ends meet, and programs like GA, SNAP, and TANF can be a lifeline for those who are living paycheck to paycheck, have no reliable income, or who are one life event away from being houseless. Further, it is unacceptable to use citizenship as a determinant of worthiness for this life-saving assistance. It is dehumanizing to deny access to these program for non-citizens, for they are just as in need as citizens are.

As you discuss the budget, I ask that you prioritize the needs of vulnerable and low-income Mainers, citizens and non-citizens alike, and allocate substantial funding to General Assistance, SNAP, and TANF and make no distinctions for eligibility based on citizenship. If anything, access to these programs should be expanded. Please don't make the poorest Mainers suffer in order to balance the state's budget.

Thank you,  
Claire Horne  
Appleton, ME