

Ann Dodd-Collins
Portland ME
LD 209

To the Honorable Margaret Rotundo, the Honorable Drew Gattine and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

I am writing in opposition to Part S of LD 209, “An Act to Make Supplemental 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”.

Part S would amend the General Assistance statutes. It would limit GA to three months of housing during a 12-month period. Aid for all other non-housing-related living expenses would be limited to 30 days during a 12-month period. A DHHS spokesperson says this “will realign the program to its statutory purpose of being a time-limited, last-resort program and enable it to operate within its baseline budget.”

Unfortunately, this does not take into account the realities we are facing in Maine. There is a housing shortage. Housing costs continue to rise. The cost of utilities continue to rise. (My own electric bill has gone from \$35 to \$75 in four months.) Food prices continue to rise.

Drastically limiting General Assistance affects everyone. It affects low income people regardless of color, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. It affects those who have been managing to make ends meet but don't have the resources to pay for a major car repair or an unanticipated medical emergency. And it affects asylum seekers who wait an average of one year before getting a work permit. GA is the place of last resort. It should not be restricted.

Our State has many resources. We do not need to balance our budget on the backs of those who have the least. My faith, and I hope yours, requires us to give them a helping hand.

I urge you to eliminate Part S of LD 209.

Sincerely,
Ann Dodd-Collins
Portland ME