

**Fair Tide, Sanford Housing Authority, York County Community Action Corporation,
and York County Shelter Programs
January 23, 2025**

In Opposition To:

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

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Carter Friend and I am the Chief Executive Officer at York County Community Action. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Fair Tide, Sanford Housing Authority, York County Community Action Corporation and York County Shelter Programs. Our organizations collectively provide a wide range of services and supports in York County for individuals and families struggling to make ends meet, experiencing homelessness, or in need of affordable housing.

We submit this testimony in strong opposition to Part S of the Supplemental Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025 (LD 209). Part S limits housing assistance under the General Assistance Program, with the exception of temporary housing and emergency shelters, to a maximum of three months in a 12-month period per household.

This proposal would directly harm the most vulnerable residents in York County and across Maine, particularly when they are working hard to regain stability. The vast majority of individuals and families utilizing GA require assistance for far less time than the limits proposed in this bill. However, for the smaller group of individuals who need assistance for longer, their circumstances often involve a complex set of challenges that cannot be resolved within a three-month timeframe. These challenges may include barriers to employment (such as lack of education or training), non-work-related injuries, medical conditions or significant financial setbacks like the death of a spouse.

Our experience demonstrates that with adequate time and supports, individuals and families can transition off GA and achieve long-term stability. Our organizations actively work alongside GA recipients to provide access to employment assistance, health care, child care, and other critical services. Stable housing is foundational to achieving these goals. A three-month time limit is insufficient for addressing the multifaceted barriers faced by many of our clients.

Furthermore, reducing access to housing assistance during a housing and homelessness crisis is not sound policy. Stable housing is more effective in promoting positive outcomes, fostering long-term economic and personal stability, minimizing the community impact of homelessness, and reducing overall costs to public systems. Interrupting this stability risks exacerbating these crises and placing greater financial and social strain on our communities.

In conclusion, we urge you to reject the proposed limitations on housing assistance outlined in Part S of LD 209. Maintaining this vital program without the proposed restrictions is essential for ensuring the well-being of Maine residents and supporting their pathway to stability and self-sufficiency.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of Maine's people.

Respectfully submitted,

Carter Friend, YCCAC CEO