



# Town of Northport

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*A community of neighbors, a tradition of caring since 1796*

## Testimony of the Town of Northport In Support Of

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

January 28, 2025

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Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Gattine, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is James Kossuth, the Town Administrator for the Town of Northport, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Town in support 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, and specifically Part S of LD 209.

The Town agrees that limiting General Assistance (GA) for housing to a maximum of three months in a twelve-month period is a reasonable limitation. GA is intended to help applicants only temporarily, to help overcome some immediate and unexpected financial obstacle. Anyone can find themselves unemployed and unable to make rent payments for a month or two, and GA should be available to households facing those dire circumstances.

But when dire circumstances become chronic, there is likely more going on with the household than the municipality has the capability or capacity to resolve, and ongoing grants of GA will not help.

For example, in the twelve months ending in June 2024, Northport granted rental assistance to the same applicant five times. The applicant was qualified and able to work and met the eligibility requirements that the Town made a condition of each grant of assistance, but it was clear that the applicant was not looking for employment as actively as the applicant could have.

Limiting GA housing assistance to a maximum of three times in a twelve-month period would encourage similar applicants to take greater initiative in finding employment and reduce the burden on taxpayers, so that funds can help those in true emergencies.