

MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION

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**Testimony of the Maine Service Centers Coalition
LD 210, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General
Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing
Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State
Government for the Fiscal Years Ending
June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027**

Senator Rotundo and Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, the Maine Mayors Coalition is submitting testimony on the General Assistance program funding included in LD 210, the proposed biennial budget.

The Maine Service Centers Coalition, comprised of 26 towns and cities across the state, articulates the importance of healthy and thriving service center communities, advocates for public policy that supports and contributes to the economic and social viability of our communities, and collaborates with municipal officials, legislators, state agencies and non-profits to pursue quality of life for all who live and work in our state.

Each of our cities and towns has different experiences administering the General Assistance program but we all agree the program is important to so many people experiencing difficult times in their lives. We also agree the State must budget adequate funds to reimburse municipalities at the required 70 percent level so we are able to continue to provide services to those in need.

In addition to being responsible for our own 30 percent share of GA, we also administer the program for the state. We must hire staff, cover employee benefits and train staff on the intricacies of GA as well as provide office space and other necessary tools. All these costs add up, and they fall squarely onto our communities and our property taxpayers.

We know you face difficult decisions as you deliberate this biennial budget. On behalf of our cities and towns, our citizens who rely on this important program and our property taxpayers, we urge you to be certain the GA funds allocated in LD 210 are sufficient for the Department of Health and Human Services to fully reimburse municipalities at 70 percent for the General Assistance program.

Thank you for your time and attention.