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February 26, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
**LD 193, An Act to Fund Students in Maine Schools Who Are Experiencing
Homelessness**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of **LD 193, An Act to Fund Students in Maine Schools Who Are Experiencing Homelessness**.

I want to thank Rep. Marshall Archer for sponsoring this critical legislation. This bill addresses an urgent need in our educational system that has only grown more pressing in recent years.

In the 2022-23 school year, 4,400 students were identified in Maine as experiencing homelessness – a number that has almost doubled from previous years. This alarming increase highlights the growing crisis that these vulnerable young people face.

LD 193 proposes a necessary amendment to the school funding formula to provide additional resources specifically targeted to support students experiencing homelessness. These students face unique challenges that require specialized support services to ensure they can access the education they deserve.

Students experiencing housing insecurity often struggle with inconsistent attendance, difficulty completing assignments and challenges focusing on academics while managing basic survival needs. By providing dedicated funding through this legislation, we can help schools develop targeted interventions to address these barriers to learning.

The proposed funding would enable schools to provide essential support services, including transportation assistance, academic support, access to school supplies and coordination with community resources to help stabilize these students' lives.

I urge the committee to consider the profound impact this legislation could have on Maine's most vulnerable students and to support its passage.

Thank you for your consideration.