



February 24, 2025

Dear Chairpersons Rotundo and Gattine, Senators Benard, Reny and Representatives Arata, Blier, Brennan, Cloutier, Dhalac, Ducharme, Fredette, Rana, and Stover:

I am writing in opposition to the decrease of General Assistance funds to a family from six months to three months. Homelessness and housing insecurity have major physical and emotional impacts on a person or family. The proposed three-month limit on General Assistance funds is inadequate for a person or family who has experienced a financial crisis that has resulted in an inability to pay their rent or mortgage.

First Parish Church has a Deacon's Fund that assists the residents of Gorham when they are in financial hardship. We are able to assist a household once a year with no more than \$350. We are often called when people have been rejected by General Assistance or they have exhausted all other possibilities. Unfortunately, \$350 cannot make much of a dent in a month's rent.

The most important tactic in addressing homelessness is keeping people in their current house. Limiting assistance to three months will create more homelessness, rather than address our current housing issues.

I urge you to maintain the nine-month rule and give the residents of Maine, who find themselves in need, a crucial tool to not only find housing stability, but also emotional stability.

Sincerely,

Rev. Christine Dyke  
Lead Minister