



MID-MAINE HOMELESS SHELTER & SERVICES

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Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services

Re: 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

My name is Dr. Katie Spencer White, and I am the President & CEO of the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services in Waterville. I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed changes in LD209, specifically the reductions in Part S that would limit GA housing assistance to no more than 3 months.

This would be catastrophic for Waterville and Kennebec County. It is not hyperbolic to say that hundreds of people would lose existing housing subsidy like BRAP (Bridging Rental Assistance Program) which is for people with a mental illness and Substance Use Disorder. To illustrate, we have one former guest (I will call him Henry) who uses BRAP and needs \$50 per month from GA in order to make his rent. Without that \$50, he will return to homelessness within weeks for nonpayment of rent.

There are thousands of Henrys across the state, people who are vulnerable and unable to pay the high cost of rent in Maine without assistance. They rely on GA to keep them from trying to survive in cars, woods, and behind box stores.

I don't know how much plainer I can make it. GA is a vital resource for the poor and the marginalized, the ill, and the abandoned. Nor can our shelter system absorb thousands of newly homeless individuals who are homeless not because they did something wrong, but because the state did.

With respect, this would be a devastating "own goal" that would have dire consequences. Three weeks ago, two unhoused men froze to death in Portland. Let's not put more lives at risk with this ill-conceived amendment.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Katie Spencer White

"Providing Emergency Food & Shelter to Homeless and Displaced Persons in central Maine"
"Founded by the Interfaith Council in 1990"