



**Written Testimony of Jess Maurer on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Judiciary**

**In Favor of LD 847 – An Act to Prohibit Housing
Discrimination**

Provided on March 10, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and the members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing.

My name is Jess Maurer, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. I am testifying in favor of LD 847.

Housing issues are of particular concern to MCOA because we know that the lack of affordable and low income housing is creating some deeply concerning trends for older people. According to a 2023 federal Department of Health & Human Services Report entitled *Addressing Homelessness Among Older Adults: Final Report*, older adults are the fastest-growing homeless population in the nation. As of 2022, the number of homeless people over the age of 62 has doubled and the number of older adults who are unhoused is expected to triple by 2030.

Not all older adults are equally at risk. Women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities who experienced economic disparities throughout their lifetimes have significantly fewer resources later in life than people who did not experience economic injustices. Older Maine women are at a particular disadvantage when compared to older men. Older women in Maine are twice as likely to live alone and to have incomes below 100% of the FPL.

According to data published in HUD's *Cityscape Journal*, low income housing vouchers increasingly serve older people and people with disabilities.¹ In fact, housing vouchers used by households headed by an older adult or an adult with a disability rose from 46.6% in 2010 to 54.3% in 2020. This only makes sense given international, national and state trends of declining birthrates coupled with a significant new longevity.

In Maine, it's nearly impossible for older people to find available low income housing, and certainly they can almost never find available housing near where they currently live. If they're lucky enough to have a voucher for housing and are lucky enough to find suitable housing, they

¹ *Cityscape*, Volume 26, Number 2, 2024

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/cityscape/vol26num2/article3.html>

should not be at risk of losing it because of how their rent is paid. We support creating this protection and hope you will vote in favor of LD 847.

Thank you. Jess Maurer