

Testimony in Opposition of

LD 007: An Act to Increase the Homestead Property Tax Exemption for Residents 65 Years of Age or Older

March 19, 2025

Chairpersons Senator Grohoski and Representative Cloutier and honorable members of the Taxation Committee:

My name is Kerry Leichtman. I am a Certified Maine Assessor serving the jurisdictions of Camden and Rockport and am writing you today in opposition to LD 007.

You are considering many bills aimed at increasing the Homestead Exemption. I am glad there has been so much focus on the Homestead Exemption as it is the best way to target meaningful property tax relief to Maine residents and I hope something comes of all this. But I also hope we have learned from the past – what works and what doesn't.

I agree that the amount of new Homestead money should be substantial. A \$75,000 exemption fits the bill. And while I strongly believe every Maine taxpayer needs relief, you may believe that seniors, whose earning potential tends to be limited, may need a little more.

One of the lessons that should have been learned as a result of the LD290 Stabilization debacle was the 10-year requirement is a problem. Assessors came to you and told you what that did to our offices. The time and expense required for checking eligibility was enormous and came at the expense of our being able to serve our constituents who had other needs.

If you are to consider this bill, either delete the 10-year requirement or spell out that it must be a consecutive length of time and also, what the applicant must do to supply proof of entitlement. Don't leave that to us.

Thank you for considering my testimony.