

Testimony in Qualified Support of  
LD 559: An Act to Provide Property Tax Stabilization for Older Maine Residents  
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 qualified support of LD 559.

Parts of this bill that make sense to me: the limited and optional local option sales tax, and the referendum requirement. Where I begin to part company with this bill is limiting the tax relief to seniors. Working families in my jurisdictions are hurting too. Businesses are suffering for a lack of employees because those employees can't find housing in town or near enough to town.

And then there's the dreaded term "stabilization." Memories of the former stabilization bill, LD 290, are not pleasant. This bill, unfortunately, repeats mistakes made in the past: the requirement to apply annually and the ten-year residency mandate.

The first correction made to the former LD 290 before it was repealed, was to eliminate the annual application. Annually renewing is an onerous chore for the elderly, maybe not for newly minted seniors but it is for the elderly. Like other bills with a ten-year residency requirement that I have testified about, if there is to be such a requirement the ten-year period should be consecutive and the proof that the applicant must supply needs to be spelled out. It should not be on the municipality to chase down records.

I don't support this bill as written but do support elements of it. I hope that when you hold your work sessions on how to deal with property tax relief, those elements become part of what you do recommend to the full Legislature.

Thank you for considering my testimony.