



March 17th, 2025

Testimony in support of LD698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Eli Durand-McDonnell, I am from Bar Harbor, Maine and I am the Policy Coordinator at Maine Youth Power, a youth-led, youth movement throughout rural and suburban Maine fighting to win human dignity, equity and a livable future for all. I write to you today on behalf of my organization to ask that you support LD698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

Maine, like many states across the country, is facing a brutal housing crisis. Many renters, especially young people or those without economic privilege are met with a lack of housing options, much less options that are actually affordable. As an organization, addressing this housing crisis from all angles is a chief concern of ours. In a months-long issue survey where we heard from over 100 young Mainers about what political issues mattered the most to them, affordable housing was ranked the most important issue, and “supporting housing-insecure people in transition” was ranked highly as a priority within that issue category.

We know that we need long-term solutions to Maine’s housing crisis, but we also know that so many Mainers, young and old, need immediate support. LD698 will address this need, and give homeless shelters the level of support that they actually need, instead of relying on a level of state subsidies that haven’t changed since before the pandemic in 2019. As we help our neighbors find their permanent homes and expand Maine’s affordable housing options, LD698 is critical to making sure that Mainers who are enduring homelessness receive the respite they need *right now*.

Once again, on behalf of Maine Youth Power, I urge you to support LD698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

Thank you for your consideration,
Eli Durand-McDonnell