



**ADVOCATES:**

*Cheryl Harkins*

*Lisa Franklin*

*Mike Stuckmeyer*

*Jim Devine*

*Ben Martineau*

*Eric Brewer*

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Benjamin Martineau, and I am an advocate with Homeless Voices for Justice. I am here to testify in favor of LD 698, An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

This Legislation will supply much-needed funding for Emergency Homeless Shelters, whose ability to stay open is under threat. When I was out on the streets eight years ago, the Oxford Street Shelter (and Preble Street Resource Center) were my lifeline away from complete destitution. Besides offering a warm roof over my head, I was connected to vital services such as food and housing navigation while being referred to assistance with my physical, mental, and spiritual health.

In conclusion, I believe LD 698 will be a very valuable piece of legislation. I greatly appreciate your time.