

Nada Milone
Portland
LD 641

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 641 — “AN ACT TO SUPPORT DIVERSION EFFORTS TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN MAINE”

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

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

My name is Nada Milone, and I am a resident of Portland, ME. I strongly support LD 641, An Act to Support Diversion Efforts to Address Homelessness in Maine, because preventing homelessness before it starts is not only the right thing to do - it's also the most cost-effective approach.

Homelessness is not just a policy issue—it's a deeply human crisis that affects real people with real struggles, hopes, and dignity. It's about the mother trying to keep her children safe in a shelter, the veteran battling PTSD with nowhere to turn, or the teenager who aged out of foster care and suddenly had no place to call home. While policies can create funding and services, they cannot replace the compassion, community, and understanding needed to address the root causes—mental health, trauma, job loss, and a lack of affordable housing. Homelessness is about lives, not just laws, and real change starts when we see people, not just statistics.

The Housing Problem Solving (HPS) program is a proven solution. In 2024, HPS helped 663 people stay housed with a budget of just \$750,000 – that's only \$1,131 per person. Compare that to the alternative: \$36,000 per year for a shelter bed or over \$7,000 for rapid rehousing. Every dollar invested in HPS saves taxpayers money while protecting individuals and families from homelessness.

With the additional funding proposed in LD 641, HPS could prevent homelessness for twice as many people—over 1,000 Mainers each year. That means fewer children are forced to change schools, fewer workers losing their jobs due to housing instability, and fewer families torn apart by avoidable crises.

I urge you to support LD 641 and invest in a program that saves money, strengthens communities, and most importantly, keeps Mainers in their homes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nada Milone
Portland, ME