



MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA)
In Support of
LD 453, An Act to Require the State to Pay 90 Percent of
All General Assistance Expenses of Municipalities and Indian Tribes

April 7, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Amanda Campbell, and I am submitting testimony in unanimous support of LD 453 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

This session, the LPC proactively established a platform of bills intended to bolster and support the property taxpayers of Maine. Through initiatives across the legislative board, they are committed to protecting the interests of their residents and to reducing the burden of property taxes. Increasing state reimbursement to 90% for General Assistance (GA) direct costs is a step towards achieving those goals.

Under the current statute, municipalities are reimbursed for 70% of the direct costs for General Assistance but are provided with no reimbursement for the local administration of this state mandated program. Local taxpayers cover the 30% balance for aid and 100% of the local administration.

As the committee knows, the baseline budget for the General Assistance program has not increased in the last 6+ years from the current \$10 million appropriation. While supplemental appropriations have been made to maintain the statutorily required 70% reimbursement to municipalities, no consideration has been given to increased costs of the aid provided to eligible applicants. Rent, food, personal supplies, utilities and heating oil have all increased. This functionally equals a decrease in reimbursement. While wages and other means of income for non-eligible applicants purchasing the same items increases with inflation, GA reimbursement does not.

Municipal officials acknowledge that the GA program needs review and revision. Until that time, the property taxpayers of Maine should not be responsible for the costs of a state mandated program. For this reason, the LPC unanimously supports LD 453.

Thank you for your consideration of the municipal perspective on this important topic. Please feel free to contact any member of the LPC or the MMA Advocacy team with any questions relating to municipal operations.