



# MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION **SINCE 1936**

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## **Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) In Opposition to**

*LD 1178, An Act to Expedite the Process Involving Municipalities That Illegally  
Move a Person to Avoid Responsibility for General Assistance Support*

April 7, 2025

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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 opposition to LD 1178 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

This bill proposes to clarify the procedure for determining the municipality of responsibility when one municipality disputes the residency of an applicant. In addition to new timelines for reimbursement and department notices, a \$10,000 penalty is proposed for any municipality found to be in violation of 22 MRSA §4307, sub-§1.

Perhaps more concerning is the proposed statutory presumption that when a resident applies for GA in a community that may not appear to be the applicant's residence, the municipality of that applicant's assumed residence has participated in illegal activity.

Instead of instituting new violation penalties, municipal officials would recommend that the department focus on the procedure that currently exists regarding determining municipality of responsibility in these situations and enforce current rules and laws. If the department has evidence of these incidents occurring, then the LPC agrees that those municipalities should be held accountable. However, this bill is extreme.

It is undeniable that applicants migrate to the communities where services exist. In some instances, navigators are working with applicants to find services which may be located outside their "resident" community. The unhoused population literally has no municipality to call home. If an applicant moves to a new community and applies for GA, but only has legal documentation from a prior community, is it presumed that the prior community moved that applicant illegally? This bill seems to make it so.

Municipal officials acknowledge that the GA program needs review and revision, however, measures that villainize municipalities as a whole are counterproductive to bolstering the GA program.

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.