

Christopher Foss
Lewiston
LD 1029

My name is Christopher Foss, and I'm a resident of Lewiston, Maine.

I'm writing to support LD 1029: An Act to Ensure General Assistance for Housing Does Not Reduce Assistance for Other Basic Necessities, and to Increase Presumptive Eligibility and State Reimbursement for General Assistance.

General Assistance is a critical program that serves as a last resort of emergency relief for Mainers facing extreme hardship. By helping people afford food, diapers, medicine, rent, heat, electricity, and other necessities, it is a literal lifeline for households who find themselves in crisis.

LD 1029 would ensure that though Mainers are spending a larger portion of their income on housing due to skyrocketing rents, anyone on General Assistance would still be able to cover other basic needs in addition to housing costs while on the program.

Currently, people in need are having to leave their communities and travel to larger service areas in the state, because smaller municipalities cannot afford to help them. LD 1029 increases the GA reimbursement rate from 70% to 90%, enabling people to be served effectively within their home town.

Meanwhile, the housing crisis and increased rates of homelessness are putting a strain on our shelter system. By extending presumptive eligibility from 30 days to 6 months, LD 1029 would help municipalities cover some of the costs of shelter beds in their communities. This would reduce the risk of closure of current shelters, which are severely underfunded.

Housing, food, and shelter are basic human rights. I urge you to support LD 1029 to ensure that Mainers and towns facing economic hardship get the help they need.

Thank you.