



P.O. Box 704
Portland, ME 04104
Phone: (207) 767-4952
Fax: (207) 767-8109
Email: info@throughthesedoors.org
www.throughthesedoors.org

Testimony of Jenny Stasio on behalf of Through These Doors

In Support of 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

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyers, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Jenny Stasio, Co-Executive Director of Through These Doors, the domestic violence resource center in Cumberland County. I am writing on behalf of Through These Doors, in support of LD 1029.

Through These Doors is one of Maine's network of regional domestic violence resource centers that provides critical, wrap-around services for survivors of domestic abuse and their children and essential support, training, and information for community response systems. Through These Doors has been providing holistic services for people experiencing domestic abuse since 1977. We serve over 20% of the individuals in Maine who reach out for domestic violence support and assistance. One of our core services is our emergency shelter for victims and survivors of abuse. Additionally, many of the people we work with across all program areas experience homelessness and housing instability.

General Assistance (GA) is an important resource for victims and survivors of abuse in Maine. Survivors of abuse need adequate access to assistance through GA for resources such as housing, food, non-food, diapers, and prescriptions. For some survivors, GA is the resource that allows them to remain in their homes by providing financial assistance to prevent homelessness, for others it is the way that we can help a survivor move from homelessness into housing.

Additionally, this bill will extend presumptive eligibility which would allow municipalities to pay for emergency shelter for people in need and prevent unsheltered homelessness. Many emergency shelters currently operate at large annual deficits. Without additional funding allocations, some emergency shelters in Maine will close. Less shelter space in the state puts survivors of abuse safety at risk if they are unable to locate and secure a safe place to go when fleeing abuse and violence in their homes.

Supporting LD 1029 will improve Maine's General Assistance program which will support victims and survivors of abuse experiencing homelessness or housing instability.