

Janet T. Mills
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Sara Gagné-Holmes
Acting Commissioner



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April 7, 2025

Senator Henry Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 637 - *Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Evaluate the Municipal General Assistance Program Database*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide information in opposition to LD 637, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Evaluate the Municipal General Assistance Program Database*.

This bill requires the Department to investigate the feasibility of a statewide database that would allow municipal General Assistance administrators to determine whether an applicant has previously applied for assistance in another municipality within the state. This bill further instructs the Department to deliver a report with the results of these findings.

The Department opposes this bill primarily because it is duplicative of existing requirements. Legislation has previously been enacted which requires the Department to provide an online municipal database to municipal GA Administrators. The work required by this bill aligns with previous legislative requirements. 22 M.R.S. §4323, sub-§6 requires the Department to develop a “real-time database containing the information necessary to properly determine an applicant’s eligibility” and §4327 requires the Department to issue a report to this Committee by January 30, 2026, and each odd-numbered calendar year thereafter.


In August 2024, the Department launched a Request for Proposals (RFP) to build a technology platform for the GA program. Evaluation of these bids began earlier this year. However, the bids that were received ranged between \$670,000 to \$3,700,000 for the first year of performance and \$820,000 to \$3,900,000 for the second year of performance. Given the current fiscal reality and ongoing increases to costs within the GA program, the Department is not able to absorb these costs into Department resources as it had originally intended.

The Department will be submitting a proposed revision to 22 M.R.S. §4323 to clarify what it can accomplish within existing resources or to delay the system until funding is available. We do not believe it makes sense to build this system at this time given existing financial constraints and until it is clear what reforms, or increases in appropriations, will be made to bring the GA program into financial sustainability. The program is projected to exceed its baseline appropriation by \$10 million

in Fiscal Year 2025 and costs are expected to continue growing, absent other reforms, in the next biennium.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Yaffe" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ian Yaffe, Director
Office for Family Independence
Maine Department of Health and Human Services