



CITY OF BANGOR

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony in Support of LD 1178 – An Act to Expedite the Process Involving Municipalities That Illegally Move a Person to Avoid Responsibility for General Assistance Support

April 4, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Jennifer Gunderman, Public Health and Community Services Director for the City of Bangor, and on behalf of the Bangor City Council I am providing testimony in support of LD 1178, “An Act to Expedite the Process Involving Municipalities That Illegally Move a Person to Avoid Responsibility for General Assistance Support.”

General Assistance offers a valuable resource to residents of the City of Bangor, helping those who have fallen on hard times to meet their basic needs that include housing, personal hygiene items, household products, etc. This resource is mandated in every municipality in the state of Maine, for residents of that specific municipality. Currently, it violates state policy to move a person or household to another municipality simply to avoid responsibility of general assistance support. Presently, the Department of Health and Human Services has 30 days to determine if a person was moved illegally. LD 1178 would cut that in half and require a decision in 15 days. Further reducing the appeal period from 30 to 15 days, while allowing for interest to accrue on unreimbursed amounts to be paid by the offending municipality and a penalty of up to \$10,000 for a repeat violation within a 12-month period, would be helpful in supporting municipalities and individuals.

We strongly support LD 1178 in its entirety, as we feel it would positively influence our municipality and strengthen relations with other municipalities. As the service center for Penobscot County, we welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with our neighbors to fulfill our shared General Assistance obligations. LD 1178 assists with assuring compliance with state law and supports the needs of our residents. It would be a valuable tool to ensure individuals will get timely and effective General Assistance services in the community where they reside and have their support structures and social networks nearby.

Thank you for your time, and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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