

Cynthia Cushing
Readfield
LD 1029

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Cynthia Cushing, and I'm a resident of Readfield, Maine.

I am testifying 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.

LD 1029 is a crucial piece of legislation that would strengthen Maine's General Assistance program, which is a last-resort safety net for Mainers facing severe hardship. This program helps people afford necessities like food, diapers, medicine, rent, heat, and electricity, acting as a critical lifeline during times of crisis.

Recognizing that rising rents are squeezing household budgets, LD 1029 would ensure that General Assistance recipients can still cover essential non-housing costs while on the program.

Currently, many Mainers in need have to travel outside their communities for support because smaller towns struggle to afford the costs. LD 1029 aims to fix this by increasing the state's reimbursement rate to 90%, empowering local municipalities to effectively assist their own residents.

Furthermore, with the increasing housing crisis and homelessness, our shelter system is strained. LD 1029 would help by extending the period for which municipalities can receive reimbursement for providing temporary shelter, reducing the risk of closure for these vital, but often underfunded, resources.

Considering that housing, food, and shelter are basic human rights, I strongly encourage your support for LD 1029 to ensure that individual Mainers and their communities facing economic hardship receive the necessary support.

Thank you, and Genuinely,