



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

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Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am here today on behalf of the CCSM to testify **in opposition to LD 1066, An Act Regarding Limits on Municipal General Assistance Programs.**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

CCSM is concerned about the implications of this bill for the many Mainers who rely on municipal General Assistance (GA) as a last-resort lifeline. The proposed limits in LD 1066 threaten to restrict access to essential support for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Many peers experience housing instability, poverty, and unemployment due to systemic barriers and stigma. General Assistance can sometimes be the only thing keeping someone from homelessness or going without food. Restricting this support or imposing additional limits will undoubtedly increase hardship, worsen health outcomes, and ultimately drive-up costs in other areas, such as emergency services, shelters, and hospitalizations.

With some housing assistance programs on pause and vouchers unavailable to those who need them the most, GA programs are essential to keep folks housed and safe. Without this program expanding, there will inevitably be more Mainers forced into being unhoused.

Instead of restricting access, we should be working together to ensure that no Mainer is left behind. When people's essential needs are met, they are better able to engage in recovery, employment, and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

On behalf of the Consumer Council System of Maine and the individuals we represent, we respectfully ask you to vote **Ought Not to Pass on LD 1066.**

Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to the well-being of all Mainers.

Sincerely,

Simonne M. Maline

Executive Director