



Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Honorable Members of Appropriations and Financial Affairs . My name is Cate Blackford. I am the public policy director of the Maine People's Alliance. MPA is Maine's largest community action organization, with 32,000 members from Kittery to Fort Kent. I am here today to share MPA's support of LD 483, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Secure Prosperity for Maine Families and Businesses.

In recent years, Maine has made significant strides in supporting families with young children and taken major steps to address our housing crisis. Two years ago, the legislature laid out a pathway to achieve affordable, accessible, quality care in every community. We increased stipends for early childhood educators, expanded eligibility for subsidies to middle income families, we passed administrative improvements to increase participation by parents and providers in essential programs, all of which are important steps towards carving that pathway.

On housing, we have increased funding for developing affordable housing, updated Maine's zoning and land use policies, invested in Housing First, made steps to strengthen tenant protections, and much more.

The bond proposed in LD 483 builds upon the foundation of that work, targeting ongoing resources at a consistent level to guarantee projects a long pipeline of funding, beyond what can be counted on using general fund dollars.

Maine People's Alliance supports the creation of a general fund bond to create capital project grants for child care facilities. The proposed amended language allocating funds to both large- and small-scale childcare projects ensures that this program is accessible to a wide range of organizations, including businesses, municipalities, nonprofits, and others that are eager to invest in their communities. We are pleased to see the exemption for smaller projects from the matching requirement to better support smaller-scale initiatives to avoid fundraising barriers from preventing small but impactful projects from moving forward.

MPA also supports the creation of a general fund bond to support the development of affordable housing. We would urge this committee to consider some of the funding allocations proposed in LD 690 to support a variety of investments, including more funding for the rural affordable rental housing program, and funding for home accessibility and repairs to help Mainers stay in their homes. These investments not only will help address the housing crisis more broadly across the state but also ensure investment in Maine's smaller communities, which can often feel left behind by programs like the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. By providing reliable bond funding for these programs, the legislature will have more flexibility to target general fund dollars to specific housing needs.



This bond proposal is an opportunity to make ongoing, strategic investments in the essential infrastructure of our communities and our economy. Maine has a bold vision for the future of both of these sectors. This bond proposal is a critical step towards realizing that vision. MPA urges you to send this to the people for their vote.

Thank you for your consideration.