



TESTIMONY OF ALICIA REA, ESQ.
LD 1022– Ought to Pass

**An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal
Matters for Persons with Low Incomes**

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
April 17, 2025

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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, greetings. My name is Alicia Rea and I am a policy fellow at the ACLU of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, I urge you to support LD 1022.

LD 1022 would fund civil legal aid in an ongoing manner and set up an annual legislative review of the state of civil legal aid in Maine. In these tough economic times, most legal aid organizations have not been able to keep up with the increasing number of people in need of assistance. Even while legal aid lawyers work tirelessly to assist financially disadvantaged people in their legal affairs, many qualified low-income persons still lack adequate legal representation.

Ensuring that civil legal aid lawyers have adequate tools to represent people who cannot afford representation is necessary to establish equal access to the courts. Without civil legal aid, the odds weigh heavily in favor of the indigent: landlords generally command vaster resources than tenants, and banks can almost always pay more than those facing foreclosure. This legislation is a positive step toward ensuring that legal aid providers across the state have the resources and tools required to provide equal access to justice to those in need.

We urge you to support LD 246.

Thank you for your time and attention.