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**Testimony in support of LD 1522**

Dear members of the Housing committee,

My name is Carly Williams and I live in South Portland. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1522.

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Put yourself in April of 2020. Remember the fear and anxiety we all felt at the beginning of quarantine. Now imagine that on top of all of the stressors you're also pregnant with twins and have a 2 year old at home. You give birth to twins in May of 2020. Your babies have extended NICU stays and you can barely visit them given the risks of COVID 19 and the health protocols.

You then navigate having two babies and one toddler for several years with no daycare support. You're unable to work so are struggling to live and support your family. After four years of working so hard to care for your kids with little to no income, you lose your housing. And then you lose your children.

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I am a foster parent. On a Friday night earlier this year, my spouse and I received a text from DHHS asking for us to take an emergency foster placement for four year old twins. They had been removed from their mom and their 6 year old brother that day and stayed with us for a week.

It was an unimaginably traumatic and challenging week for them that I have no doubt caused irreparable harm to these children. They were mad, confused, and sad. They missed their family. They only stayed with us for a week, but they're still in foster care and a caseworker told me that they were likely to be in foster care for "at least 12-18 months."

One morning, one of the boys said to me, "We don't have a house and that is why we have a new family." I am heartbroken for these boys and how the state of Maine has failed them. If mom could have remained in her apartment and avoided eviction, this family would have likely been able to stay together.

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As a foster parent, the government pays my household \$25 a day per child. That is over \$9,000 per child annually. It costs an average of \$25,000 per child to keep them in foster care annually according to [CarePortal](#) when you factor in the costs to pay for the parents' attorneys, foster parents, a caseworker, other service providers, and court time. That means that the state of Maine will now be spending \$75,000 - over \$110,000 to keep these three kids in foster care for the next 12-18 months.

Now imagine a world where Maine invested in stable housing for that family and prevented her eviction and prevented this cycle of harm and trauma from continuing.

I urge you to pass LD 1522. Continuing to invest in the Eviction Prevention Program is critical. Keeping Mainers in stable housing will impact Maine families now and for generations to come. Thank you for your time and for your efforts to represent and support Mainers.

Thank you,  
Carly Williams