

Betsy Williams
Brunswick
LD 1522

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick, and I am a member of the Maine State Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, a statewide organization whose mission it is to bring our religious values to the public square. Today I would like to address both LD 1522 and LD 1016.

Few issues today call out for a compassionate response more than housing for low-income Mainers. LD 1522 would turn a highly successful pilot program into a permanent tool in our housing crisis mitigation toolbox. Providing temporary financial support to those facing certain eviction is not the final answer to their housing problems. But it is an answer to the call to love your neighbor as yourself, and that, in my opinion, is the call of public service and compassionate public policy.

Between large often out-of-state housing developers and local NIMBY resistance, there is little the legislature can do to solve Maine's housing shortage—for low-income Mainers or even middle-income first-time home buyers. LD 1522 offers the opportunity to build on something that you know works, a way to keep people in the homes they already have.

Like many of my fellow retired Mainers I worry for Maine's future if we don't lean in heavily with support for initiatives such as LD 1016. As a resident of Brunswick, I witnessed the success of the owner negotiated purchase of their mobile home park when it went on the market. Passage of LD 1016 will support similar efforts around the state. Like LD 1522, it is one answer to keeping people in the homes they already have. I find it hard to understand why such common sense—and compassionate—bills are contentious at all.

Please do what you can do, support what you know works, and vote OTP on these two proven winners in state housing assistance.

Thank you.