

**Testimony in Support of LD 1522, “An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program.”**

James Myall, Senior Policy Analyst

April 24, 2025

Good Morning Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is James Myall and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at the Maine Center for Economic Policy. I’m here today to testify in support of LD 1522, “An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program.” MECEP supports LD 1522 not only as a way to keep more Mainers in their homes at a time of rising costs, but also a means of avoiding other public costs.

Tens of thousands of Mainers face housing insecurity and risk of eviction. In 2023, over 70,000 renter households – almost half of all renters – paid more than the recommended 30% of their household income in rent. Almost 32,000 of those paid more than half of their monthly income in rent.<sup>i</sup> According to a different survey, in 2024, 29,000 Mainers were behind on rent on average each week, almost 12,000 of whom were likely to be evicted within two weeks.<sup>ii</sup>

The establishment of the eviction prevention pilot program has already helped to keep hundreds of Mainers in their homes and the establishment of a permanent program will ensure that this success continues. In addition to the immediate stability this will bring Maine families, we know that having a secure roof over your head means Mainers are healthier, better able to thrive economically, and succeed better in their jobs and schools.

Conversely, we know that evictions make it more likely that Mainers will need to turn to other public services. As a result, the appropriations for this program will not only be an investment in the Mainers who will be helped by it, but will also produce offsetting savings to public services elsewhere:

- In the first instance, many of the people eligible for the new program would otherwise turn to their town or city’s General Assistance Program for help. The EPP will reduce the pressure on municipal budgets and, ultimately, on property-tax payers.
- What’s more, if these individuals do not receive help, there’s a higher chance that they will end up homeless and relying on emergency shelters and other supports.<sup>iii</sup> The average cost per night to operate a bed in an emergency shelter in Maine is

\$95.<sup>iv</sup> That's the equivalent of \$2,850 a month, well above the fair market rent limit for applicants in this program.<sup>v</sup>

- Evictions also create additional costs for individuals and for the public purse. People who are evicted from their home suffer health impacts that cause them to require more treatment through programs like MaineCare.<sup>vi</sup> Children who suffer the disruption of housing instability struggle in school and are more likely to need intervention from child welfare services at home.<sup>vii</sup> In the most extreme cases, people evicted from their homes are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated in jail – all of which bears a cost for taxpayers.<sup>viii</sup>

MECEP believes LD 1522 is a smart investment which will have real and immediate impact on Mainers' lives while also avoiding other costs over the long term. We urge you to vote "ought to pass." Thank you and I'm happy to take any questions.

## Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023 data. Table B25070 via data.census.gov

<sup>ii</sup> MECEP analysis of US Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, 2024 data for phase 4.0, cycle 1 through 4.2 cycle 9, covering the period January 9 through Sept 16, 2024.

<sup>iii</sup> Robert Collison and Davin Reed, "The Effects of Evictions on Low-Income Households." December 2016.

[https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/upload\\_documents/evictions\\_collinson\\_reed.pdf](https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/upload_documents/evictions_collinson_reed.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Maine Housing, "2025 Cost of Shelter Study." January 2025 [https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/policy-research/research-reports/homeless-reports/2025-shelter-cost-study.pdf?sfvrsn=bc669d15\\_3](https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/policy-research/research-reports/homeless-reports/2025-shelter-cost-study.pdf?sfvrsn=bc669d15_3)

<sup>v</sup> US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Market Rent summary 2025.

[https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2025\\_code/2025state\\_summary.odn](https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr/fmrs/FY2025_code/2025state_summary.odn)

<sup>vi</sup> Gabriel Scharzt et al., "Eviction, Healthcare Utilization, and Disenrollment Among New York City Medicaid Patients." *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 2022 Vol 62 Issue 2, 157-164.

[https://www.ajpmonline.org/action/showPdf?pii=S0749-3797\(21\)00491-8](https://www.ajpmonline.org/action/showPdf?pii=S0749-3797(21)00491-8)

<sup>vii</sup> Daniel Gubits et al. "Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families." US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Oct 25, 2016

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Family-Options-Study.html>

<sup>viii</sup> Melany Mondello et al, "Cost of Rural Homelessness: Rural Permanent Supportive Housing Cost Analysis." State of Maine. May 2009. [https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/policy-research/research-reports/homeless-reports/homeless-reports-archive/cost-of-rural-homelessness-5-2009.pdf?sfvrsn=af65d015\\_7](https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/policy-research/research-reports/homeless-reports/homeless-reports-archive/cost-of-rural-homelessness-5-2009.pdf?sfvrsn=af65d015_7)