

Michael Beck
BANGOR
LD 1410

Honorable Committee Members,

I'm testifying in favor of this bill, LD1410, because I've spent significant time speaking with people who are unhoused right here in our community in Bangor. One of the most consistent and distressing stories I hear is how they've had important personal belongings taken and thrown away during encampment sweeps.

This isn't just about losing 'stuff'; it creates profound trauma. Imagine losing the only photo you have left of your parents, keepsakes from a spouse who has passed away, or even medals earned serving our nation. Beyond the deep personal pain, losing these items makes it logistically much harder, sometimes nearly impossible, to get out of homelessness. When your birth certificate, state ID, military service records, old pay stubs, or medical records are gone, how do you re-integrate? Replacing these essential documents is incredibly difficult when you have no fixed address and limited or no means.

What this bill asks for is fundamentally reasonable. When people and their belongings are being removed from public land, providing notice, a chance to be heard, and crucially, storing their property securely for 90 days is a fair requirement. Ninety days is not an excessive amount of time when someone is trying to get back on their feet. People need time to land somewhere – they might be temporarily jailed, trying to find a place to stay short-term, or re-establishing elsewhere. They need that window to achieve some stability before they can focus on retrieving their property.

We shouldn't be making the already incredibly difficult climb out of homelessness even harder by taking away the little people have, especially the very tools – like identification – they need to access services and support. This bill establishes necessary and humane procedures. It recognizes the value of these belongings and the humanity of the people who own them. I urge you to support its passage.

Sincerely,
Michael Beck
Bangor