

H.O.M.E., Inc.

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"Serve First Those Who Suffer Most"
Proud member of Emmaus International

April 28, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Julie Ream and I am here today as the Program Coordinator at H.O.M.E. Inc. in Hancock County and as someone who has personally experienced homelessness.

I am here to testify in support of LD 978, An Act to Increase General Assistance Reimbursement for Municipalities and Indian Tribes.

I want to bring the conversation to what these changes could mean in real life. For shelters like H.O.M.E., for communities in rural and underserved areas, and for people like me who once needed these services to survive.

Shelters like H.O.M.E. are not only operating traditional shelter sites, we also extend critical outreach services into deeply underserved areas like Hancock and Washington County, where options for emergency shelter, healthcare, transportation, and food are extremely limited. In rural regions, when shelters close or services disappear, there is no "next shelter down the street." There is nowhere left to go. General Assistance is one of the few tools available to help stabilize individuals and families during a crisis, but without the ability for shelters to reliably access reimbursement, we are stretching resources thinner and thinner to keep people safe.

LD 978, combined with the improvements proposed in LD 1029, would make it possible for shelters to more effectively seek reimbursement for emergency overnights, helping providers stay open and keeping vulnerable Mainers off the streets.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Ream
Program Coordinator