



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of Meg Helming
before the Committee on Taxation
in opposition to

LD 438: An Act to Allow Municipalities to Limit Nonprofit Property Tax Exemptions
and
LD 1795: An Act to Change the Calculation for Municipal Service Charges for Tax-exempt Organizations

May 6, 2025

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Committee on Taxation, my name is Meg Helming and I am the COO of the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England, which represents the 15 YMCAs in Maine. The YMCA strongly opposes LDs 438 and 1795, as they would harm community-based nonprofits like the YMCA that provide essential services to Maine families.

The first YMCA in Maine was founded in 1853. Today, the 15 YMCAs across the state serve more than 95,000 Mainers annually through a wide array of mission-driven programs that respond directly to community needs. YMCAs in Maine provide essential services that not only strengthen individuals and families, but also help sustain the state's economy and social fabric. These services include early education and childcare that enable parents to work, afterschool enrichment that supports academic achievement, and summer camps that build resilience and confidence in young people.

In addition to youth development, Maine YMCAs offer health and wellness programming for all ages, including evidence-based chronic disease prevention and management programs such as Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring, Diabetes Prevention, and Livestrong® for cancer survivors. YMCAs also operate food access programs — including free meal distribution and mobile pantries — to help address food insecurity among children, seniors, and working families.

By delivering these services locally, YMCAs reduce strain on government systems and fill critical service gaps, especially in rural and underserved areas. Our ability to remain responsive and accessible to those in need is directly tied to our nonprofit, tax-exempt status. This status enables Ys to reinvest every dollar into community programs, facilities, and scholarships, ensuring no one is turned away due to inability to pay. It is a vital component of our capacity to serve Maine's most vulnerable residents with dignity, equity, and impact.

Each year, the Maine YMCAs provide an average of \$1.8 million in financial aid – including scholarships for childcare, camp, and wellness programs – to Maine families. Requiring the YMCAs to pay service fees or property taxes would have a significant and negative impact on our ability to provide our programming and financial support. It would disproportionately affect those that are most vulnerable in our community – low income families, individuals with mental health and substance use challenges, seniors, and immigrants.

We respectfully urge the Committee to vote ought not to pass on LDs 438 and 1795. These policies would directly result in the Y and other community-based organizations being forced to serve fewer of Maine's most vulnerable residents. We remain committed to working in partnership with our state and local governments and other nonprofits to strengthen communities across Maine. Thanks to each of you for your public service.

Contact: Meg Helming, COO, YMCA Alliance of Northern New England
P: 207.232.9896 **E:** meg.helming@nneymcas.org



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Sincerely,

Meg Helming
YMCA Alliance of Northern New England

Representing:

Bangor Region YMCA • Bath Area Family YMCA • Boothbay Region YMCA • Central Lincoln County YMCA
• Down East Family YMCA • Kennebec Valley YMCA • Mount Desert Island YMCA • Old Town Orono
YMCA • Penobscot Bay YMCA • Sanford-Springvale YMCA • State YMCA Camp of Maine • Waldo County
YMCA • YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston • YMCA of Greater Waterville • YMCA of Southern Maine

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