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**Testimony in Opposition to LD 1036
("An Act to Protect Recipients of Public Assistance from Housing Discrimination")**

**J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®
May 6, 2025**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® protect private property rights, build Maine communities, and grow our state's economy. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® opposes LD 1036. The bill establishes a new protected class under the Maine Human Rights Act for recipients of public assistance – including medical assistance and housing subsidies. Maine's current statute already makes it unlawful for housing providers to discriminate against tenants based on their receipt of public assistance. In turn, LD 1036 is an unnecessary proposal. We are also concerned about the unintended consequences of a blanket application of this provision to other portions of the Maine Human Rights Act including for the sale of real estate.

Specifically, discrimination could be alleged any time an applicant for housing is denied or an offer to purchase is not accepted, for any number of reasons. Sellers and housing providers enter into contractual agreements based on the needs of both parties for reasons beyond type of financing or source of funds. Creating additional parameters around how sellers and housing providers contract would create additional concerns around litigation that would result in lengthy and costly court fees.

LD 1036 would discourage many from renting their property at all. The bill would limit a housing provider's ability to manage their own property, and it would place additional regulations on the private sector's ability and desire to provide rental housing in our state. Property owners who lease their units are operating Maine businesses. They provide housing and tenants pay a monthly rent that covers the cost of providing this housing. By increasing the regulations on housing providers' ability to navigate their business in a manner similar to other businesses, this bill will make the market unfavorable for property owners, and disincentivize entry or continuation in providing rental housing.



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MAR supports initiatives that serve to increase the availability and affordability of housing through the private sector, not deter housing providers, restrict rights and cause additional undue harm to housing in our state. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1036. Thank you for your time and consideration.