

Jeffrey Van West  
Portland  
LD 1927

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for hearing LD 1927. My name is Jeff Van West from Portland and I'm the owner of a two unit building literally next door to the home that I've lived in for over 20 years.

I urge you to vote against passage of this bill for all the reasons that you've heard in other vote-no testimony: The bill puts the greatest —possibly insurmountable—burden on the landlords least able to comply and most likely doing the right things already. Myself included. Instead of promoting fair housing, we will be left with only large investment groups owning the vast majority of buildings—and doing the bare minimum to maintain them and serve the tenants. This is exactly opposite to the kind of housing and community we want to promote across the state of Maine.

If the committee decides to proceed with this bill, at the very least, I recommend amending it to exempt small, community-based landlords from these onerous burdens. I also encourage the committee to consider amending the term "owner occupied" throughout Maine such that the landlord can simply live within 3000 feet of the unit in question. That would allow the owner-occupied exemptions to encompass the true intent of local ownership. It would be an enormous boon to landlords like me who own property on our own street, where we have a vested interest in maintaining the property in the best possible way and treating our tenants as the neighbors that they are.