



22 Shapleigh Road
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Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Re: Support for LD1910: An Act to Strengthen Housing Stability Services by Increasing Support and Outreach

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and the esteemed members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Emily Flinkstrom and I am the Executive Director of Fair Tide, a non-profit providing deeply affordable housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness in the southern part of our state. I serve as a representative from Region One (York and Cumberland Counties) to the Statewide Homeless Council and am an active member of Maine's Homeless Policy Committee. Fair Tide is also the co-founder of Mainspring, a new resource hub of social services that offers coordinated, wrap-around support to help households find stability and navigate a pathway out of poverty.

In this very tough market, it is challenging to secure housing once someone falls into homelessness. The journey from homelessness to stable housing is filled with complicated applications, numerous wait lists, and loads of disappointment and frustration. Managing this process while also living in the constant crisis of not knowing where you and your family will sleep each night is nearly impossible to do alone. LD1910 will allow service providers throughout the state to offer one-on-one guidance to help folks experiencing homelessness walk through this process. The inevitable result will be a rise in successful placements into safe and secure housing.

Fair Tide's work demonstrates the critical role that these supportive services play in the housing continuum. Over our 26 years of existence, our team has been able to secure housing for hundreds of households by meeting people where they are, sitting beside them to fill out applications, advocating to landlords and offering a light at the end of a dark tunnel. We have worked with some individuals for years before finally being able to find them a home, sticking with them through the long process and connecting them to basic needs resources to keep them as safe and healthy as possible in the interim.

Just as important as the initial work of moving someone into a home is ongoing, targeted case management to ensure long-term success. Similar to other programs in our state that provide this type of support, Fair Tide has a 92% success rate in keeping folks housed for at least a year – and most for much longer. This prevents relapses into homelessness and allows individuals an opportunity to address all other aspects of life that get pushed to the side when a family is living in the crisis of homelessness. Case managers offer assistance in addressing physical and mental health issues, tackling substance use, furthering education and employment, becoming stronger parents, building a solid support system and achieving overall financial stability.



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This bill offers an opportunity to expand the good work already being done successfully throughout Maine so we can keep up with the demand for these services. If passed, LD1910 will have a multi-generational impact and make our fellow Mainers, our local communities and our state stronger and healthier.

Thank you for considering your support of LD1910 and we would welcome the opportunity to engage in further conversations as you contemplate this important bill.

With appreciation,

Emily Flinkstrom, MSW

Executive Director

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