



May 12, 2025

Senator Chip Curry  
Representative Traci Gere  
Honorable Members of the Committee on Housing & Economic Development  
Maine State Legislature  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

**RE: Testimony in support of LD 1910 - An Act to Strengthen Housing Stability Services by Increasing Support and Outreach**

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Gere & Honorable Members of the Committee on Housing & Economic Development:

My name is Richard A. Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I have the honor of serving as appointed Chair of Maine's Statewide Homeless Council. I also serve as the President & CEO for VOA Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. VOA Northern New England is a faith-based, community nonprofit that works with people experiencing deep poverty, disabilities, and homelessness.

On behalf of the Statewide Homeless Council, I wish to submit this written testimony in support of LD 1910 an Act to strengthen housing stability services and outreach. Our state's homeless response system is fragile and insufficiently resourced to serve all families and individuals experiencing homelessness. Too many people remain stuck in our state's high quality emergency shelters awaiting a housing unit or sleep outside, in vehicles, or in structures that are not safe or habitable. While there is a spectrum of emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing, the need is simply not adequate.

Ending homelessness requires the ability to build trusting relationships with persons experiencing the trauma of homelessness and the capacity to connect people with community resources and local housing units. Maine lacks the social service capacity to work with those on our streets or in shelters. The Statewide Homeless Council unanimously supported LD 1910 as a priority policy legislation this year given the significant lack of mobile support services – the type of services that research has shown to prevent homelessness, respond to public health and law enforcement needs, locate local housing units, and achieve housing stability. Without this missing piece of our 'response system' too many families and people will remain too long in shelter beds or in public encampments. This policy proposal also has a bonus of improving coordination or efficient delivery of mobile social supports by allowing the Department of Health and Human Services to contract with experienced nonprofit organizations to offer these services.

Without this incremental annual investment of \$1.7 million, the Statewide Homeless Council believes that historical investments in emergency shelters, housing assistance, and housing first will not be adequately coordinated or utilized.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am grateful for your public service and leadership to Maine!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard A. Hooks Wayman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard A. Hooks Wayman, President & CEO  
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