

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR JOE BALDACCI

Leave to Withdraw

L.D. 1952, “An Act Regarding Home Heating Fuel Assistance” May 20, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Senator Joe Baldacci, representing Senate District 9, Bangor and Hermon, and I am here today to respectfully request a Leave to Withdraw on L.D. 1952, “An Act Regarding Home Heating Fuel Assistance.”

The intention with this legislation was to address concerns that have been raised by some of the vendors, and even some of our constituents, about the inefficiencies in this important program.

We had hoped to bring a bill today to help start a discussion about how the program could be improved to make sure our constituents are getting the assistance they need in a timely fashion without burdening our vendors with costs that don't add value. Unfortunately, the bill as drafted is really unworkable, and given the late date of session, I don't feel like it is appropriate to ask the committee to work through the various problems in the bill.

I do remain committed to this issue, however, and my hope is to bring something back to the Legislature in the future to address the matter. I also know that there are discussions ongoing at Maine State Housing Authority with fuel oil and propane companies on how it can be improved. OPEGA is also looking into this issue after hearing complaints from fellow legislators. Given these ongoing discussions, it feels appropriate to pull this bill and revisit the matter down the road.

Thank you so much for your consideration.