

To the esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Emma Lombardo and I work for Project Home as a Program Specialist for the Eviction Prevention Program. I am writing to you in support of including LD 1522 to Establish the Eviction Prevention Program, in the Supplemental Budget Bill LD 2212.

In less than 9 months, our team processed 3247 applications, approved 1272 applications, and dispersed \$15.5M to prevent evictions. As a team we proved that the program could operate efficiently. But more importantly, the continued volume of applications and inquiries demonstrates that the need persists.

There are programs in place to support home owners, however, renters face greater imminent risk of losing their homes. Evictions are a costly amalgamation of court fees, manual labor and financial investment for landlords. For renters, the result is financial debt, a permanent mark that follows, and the loss of a home

The Eviction Prevention Program has operated as a unique solution to this issue. An approval for a family of four in Southern Maine meant a life-saving transplant for their son, dependent on a stable home where he could recover. An approval for a man at a sober living facility in Central Maine meant continued support of his sobriety and achieving his goal of moving into his own apartment. An approval for a mother in Northern Maine meant that she could stay in her home and continue to operate her business that is so loved by her community.

So while the Eviction Prevention Program is a contribution to preventing evictions, it is also an investment into local communities. I hope that you consider the importance of prioritizing funding towards the Eviction Prevention Program.

Thank you so much for your time.