



Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Nyawal Lia and I live in Portland. I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 2212.

I am the coordinator of Housing Justice Maine. A coalition that currently includes Maine Peoples, Maine Equal Justice, Community Organizing Alliance, Maine Youth Power and last but not least Homeless Voices for Justice, a program that stems out of Prebble Street.

What all of these organizations have in common is that we all believe that housing is a human right. This year many of our organizations have advocated for issues such as eviction prevention and shelter funding, because we know how crucial lack of funding for these programs means for our members. Please consider these points

Most of us believe that everyone deserves a stable, affordable place to call home. But from Fort Kent to Lubec to Kittery, Maine is in a housing crisis (1).

Increasingly, we're seeing rich corporate investors buying people's homes, hiking up rents and putting families on the street – putting their huge profits ahead of ordinary people (2). Housing costs have skyrocketed (3), and federal cuts to vital programs (4) mean more and more Mainers will struggle to find and stay in stable housing in 2026 (5).

We must ensure that Mainers are protected from discrimination and predatory rent hikes and fees, that people wishing to build new housing in Maine have a chance to do so, and that unhoused people have a place to go at night. As for today's hearing we want to remind you all that:

- All Mainers deserve safe, affordable housing.
- I urge you to fully fund emergency rental assistance in the Eviction Prevention Program. This program has been widely successful in keeping people in their homes. Survey results [show](#) that seven out of eight participants maintained their housing after engaging with the program. Furthermore, 70% of applicants found the process easy to navigate, praising the straightforward instructions and helpful staff.
- I appreciate the Governor's proposed shelter funding, and I urge you to include that funding in the supplemental budget. The Governor's proposed

allocation is critical to begin remedying shelters' unsustainable funding gap.

- **Raise taxes on the ultra-rich and corporations, and reject copying Trump's corporate tax cuts.**
 - Funding for housing is essential to Maine families and communities. I urge you to raise revenue and reject Trump's cuts to guarantee essential programs like housing. Please include LD 1089, 229 and 1879 (or better) in the budget.

As I continue to organize in our communities, being a resident of Cumberland county. I know what more funding resources really means for families who are on the brink of homelessness as we speak. Thank you for your time and the thoughtful work you are doing for the residents of Maine.

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