

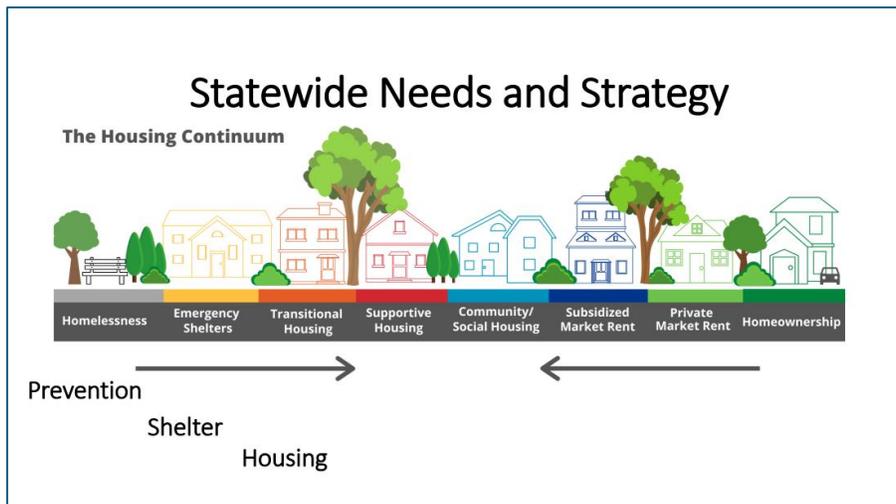
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 2212

An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

February 26, 2026

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Carter Friend and I am the CEO of York County Community Action. I am testifying on behalf of the York County Committee on Homelessness. Our Committee is comprised of representatives from 16 municipalities and community-based organizations from across York County.¹ We have come together to work collaboratively to address the issue of homelessness in our communities.

I am testifying in favor of LD 2212's provisions related to homelessness and housing. Our organizations work closely together every day to address York County's homelessness and affordable housing crises. We have found that to be successful, it is vitally important to address each part of the Housing Continuum – from prevention, to emergency shelter, to housing, and ultimately to homeownership.



The housing continuum in Maine is not healthy right now. People are stuck at every level. Individuals remain in emergency shelters because there is no affordable rental housing available. Older adults are living alone in large homes because there are no smaller, accessible options to downsize into. Young families are stuck in rentals because homeownership is out of reach. When one part of the continuum fails, pressure builds across the entire system.

¹ Current members include representation from the municipalities of Biddeford, Eliot, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Kittery, Old Orchard Beach, Saco and Sanford, as well as the community-based organizations Caring Unlimited, Fair Tide, Sanford Housing Authority, Seeds of Hope, Southern Maine Agency on Aging, York Community Service Association, York County Community Action Corporation, York County Shelter Programs.

The \$69 million proposal recognizes the need to support the entire continuum. It supports production, preservation, homelessness response, aging in place, and local implementation. The \$55 million for new housing production will expand supply across the continuum.

Equally important is the \$12 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund. This fund provides flexible, responsive resources that support both individuals experiencing homelessness and the agencies working to serve them. It lifts up proven programs while also allowing communities to create new services that fill critical gaps as needs evolve. Housing needs are not static, and our response cannot be either.

For these reasons, we urge you to support these portions of LD 2212. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carter Friend
CEO, York County Community Action

On behalf of the York County Committee on Homelessness:

York County municipalities: Biddeford, Eliot, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, Kittery, Old Orchard Beach, Saco and Sanford

York County community-based organizations: Caring Unlimited, Fair Tide, Sanford Housing Authority, Seeds of Hope, Southern Maine Agency on Aging, York Community Service Association, York County Community Action Corporation, York County Shelter Programs