



February 27, 2026

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Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Camey, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Judiciary,

My name is Annika Moore, and I am the Advocacy Supervisor at Preble Street. The mission of Preble Street is to provide accessible, barrier-free services to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty, and to advocate for solutions to these problems. Preble Street operates 20 programs across Maine, and our staff works daily alongside individuals facing legal issues like eviction, benefit denials, and domestic violence.

On behalf of Preble Street, I am writing to urge you to include \$3 million for the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund in the FY 2026–27 Supplemental Budget, in addition to the \$1.3 million baseline. Without this funding, Maine’s statewide civil legal aid network will be forced to reduce services at a time of urgent demand.

Many individuals arrive at Preble Street programs in a state of desperation after being evicted or denied benefits. Without access to civil legal representation, these individuals may struggle to rebuild their lives and achieve economic stability.

Civil legal aid services can be the difference between homelessness and long-term stability for many Mainers. Preble Street has the privilege of partnering with the Maine Volunteer Lawyers Project to establish the Maine Homeless Legal Project—a program that pairs homeless and housing-insecure clients with skilled pro bono lawyers for civil legal advice. I want to share one recent client story demonstrating how access to legal assistance made a difference to someone facing a potential housing crisis.

Mary Ann had experienced homelessness on and off her entire adult life and had recently been housed. She was excited to be on the path to rebuilding her life when she received a 30-day notice to quit in the mail from her property manager. A fellow tenant had wrongly accused Mary Ann of violating her lease, and the property manager had sided with the other tenant. A Preble Street caseworker helped Mary Ann seek legal counsel through the Maine Homeless Legal Project. Mary Ann received expert advice that helped her feel safe during an incredibly difficult time, and her case was eventually dropped. Mary Ann was able to remain in her apartment, and when her caseworker visited recently, Mary Ann reflected that she was in a much better place, now having “a home, a job, recovery, and peace of mind.”

We anticipate that the need for civil legal aid will only be compounded as Mainers start to experience the cuts to MaineCare and food assistance included in the federal budget reconciliation bill. The new requirements are cumbersome and difficult to navigate; legal aid providers will work to support low-income Mainers in coping with these changes, but if the \$3 million is not included in the Supplemental Budget, fewer individuals and families will have access to these critical services.

A \$3 million funding allocation to civil legal aid in the FY 2026–27 Supplemental Budget, in addition to the \$1.3 million in baseline funding, will ensure that clients like Mary Ann can continue to access legal representation at critical life moments. We ask

that you please include this funding in the Supplemental Budget to maintain the state's current civil legal aid capacity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.