

Good afternoon. Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee On Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, I am Patrick Corey and I live in Windham. I'd like to thank Representative Fay for sponsoring **LD 666, An Act to Support Community-based Volunteer Organizations** and wish to speak in **SUPPORT.**

Today I serve as the president of a small, but successful community-based, all-volunteer non-profit called Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors. We provide emergency heating fuel assistance for people that fall through the cracks in our community. We serve people that are involved in an application process, don't qualify for a program like LIHEAP, or are on fixed incomes. Windham Neighbor's was founded in 2007 by the Honorable Bill Diamond, Mark Bryant, and Gary Plummer. Former State Senator Diamond really took the lead and had the capacity to pull together all of the elements to create a truly great organization that has flourished. We only help Windham residents.

When fuel oil prices went up last year we went into fundraising mode with incredible success. We get a lot of calls from people in outlying communities and agencies we cannot help based on our mission. Given that, I started considering if other communities could start similar organizations. Of course, without someone like Bill, I don't believe many could pull this off.

Generally, when I see a problem that needs to be solved, my first thought is not government. When I think about DECD's work with private industry and small business, I wonder if similar services could be offered to non-profits, not unlike the work of the Maine Office of Business Development.

Some of my biggest legislative successes were when I brought bills that were not prescriptive. I'm glad to see this bill puts rule making in DECD's hands so that they can best determine how to help these necessary organizations flourish.

My community holds Windham Neighbor's in pretty high esteem. I know this because they are generous in their support and when I look at my board, I have the best of the best helping out to achieve our mission. Due to our all-volunteer make-up, nearly every dollar we raise is converted to BTUs to heat our community. We are able to help our neighbors stay warm during the winter because we're focused and local. We've attracted recognized community leaders who've worked to make us a local priority.

I would like to thank this committee in advance for your careful consideration of this bill. I'd also like to thank Representative Fay for not only submitting this bill, but doing a lot of the leg work in finding where these organizations can best be served. Remember, these small, local, non-profits are some of the most colorful and strongest threads that hold together the fabric of our communities. Have a great day.