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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 2 An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund

April 4, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, members of the Special Committee on Housing, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership and we support LD 2 An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund.

LD 2 targets a minority of the homeless population in the state. Although it is a minority, it is a population that gets a lot of attention, but not the kind it needs. For many years, in this building and in city council meetings we have talked about addressing the real problems people have, be it substance use, mental illness or trauma, with services that are there when people need them. We need to help people stay safe, as healthy as can be and to avoid emergency room visits unless necessary.

Rather than people cycling between jail, the emergency room and shelters, providing a permanent place to call home will save lives and dollars. The funds proposed here, \$8 – 9 million, sounds like a lot, but it pales in comparison to what we are now spending in MaineCare, jails and in what should be short term shelters.

We are firm believers in the Housing First model, we know it works and we fully support the type of Housing First laid out in LD 2.

We also know that large buildings for people who are chronically or even episodically homeless will not work in much of the state. In most cases, setting aside one unit in a four unit building or two in a ten unit building is more practical and just as effective. I hope that later this year or even next we can continue to work on this problem and its solutions together.

Thank you for bringing this bill forward, I am happy to try to answer any questions you have.

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