

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and Distinguished Members of the Select Joint Committee on Housing:

Good afternoon, I am Jessica D. Linzer, aka Jessica Simpson, a resident of Cape Elizabeth, and am testifying in opposition to LD214, the bill that wants to amend laws, zoning and land use restrictions to apply only to towns with a population of more than 10,000 residents. Let's stop, right there – if this were to pass, it would allow over 95% of the 519 towns in Maine to evade responsibility from the thrust, intent and solutions enshrined in LD2003, the original bill passed by the legislature a year ago. That's because there are only 22 towns or cities in Maine with 10,000 or more residents. LD214 is an underhanded way of exempting almost all of Maine's towns from creating accessory dwelling units, as an example, to address our housing shortage.

I come to this issue from 2 perspectives, one as a volunteer/advocate with AARP Maine who has been attending, when possible, the hearings in this committee. I have heard firsthand, as have you, as to the convergence of many factors that's creating more housing insecurity, less affordable housing, and growing wait lists. Plus, worker shortages due to housing shortages, as well as people and businesses choosing to live or invest elsewhere because of our lack of housing, affordable or not.

My other perspective is as a resident of Cape Elizabeth, a town with unidentified people who formed a group, Cape Neighbors Alliance, taking out half-page ads in the local paper touting passage of this bill, and fighting attempts to enact the provisions for ADU's. It's important for you to hear from a Cape resident who is wholly in favor of the legislation passed last year to try to address our housing crisis. It is a crisis, and the establishment of this committee demonstrates that the legislature agrees.

To illustrate this crisis, I have a dear friend who lived 50+ years in Cape Elizabeth. She and her family lived in a home until her divorce. She then moved with her children into a duplex, as a renter, in Cape Elizabeth for the past 29 years. She only had a lease her first year. Thereafter, she was month to month. It's hard to imagine anyone living under this tenuous rental agreement for 28 plus years!

Unfortunately, her anxiety over her housing situation came to a head the first week in May, 2022. She received a letter from the current landlord, the surviving children of the original homeowners. She was notified that she had until June 2022 to vacate, since they were selling the house. She was devastated and terrified of her prospects. Fortunately, friends and family had taken some actions in the prior year with her daughter helping her apply to a number of housing options – for seniors, etc. and she was on 4 lists. In desperation, my friend called them, explained her imminent need, and thank goodness, there was one apartment coming up, in a different town, and a different county, but available for June. After a half century in Cape

Elizabeth, my friend had to leave her beloved town and of course, said "yes", sight unseen, to the apartment, because, at least now she would not be homeless.

I asked my friend, if one of her children built an ADU, would she consider living in it? "Absolutely", she replied. Her current apartment is about the size of an ADU, 600+ sf, but is not subsidized. My friend, in her late 70's, is still employed, and truly would cherish the security, stability and sense of community an ADU would bring, both financially and in terms of future caregiving. She could finally stop working yet still have a retirement lifestyle with some breathing room.

Are my fellow Capers afraid of who will live in an ADU? I say - it would be by and large family – either young, middle aged or older. A college graduate son or daughter in need of independence but also in need of housing as they look for a job. A divorced son or daughter who needs a place while their life is in transition, or a parent, most likely alone, who wants to be near children or grandchildren as they themselves age.

An ADU is a gift of sorts, a gift of caring for each other, a gift of providing a precious resource- a home, a place to call home, for so many who are in need. We must remember: "There but for the grace of God go I."

We cannot and must not let a bill like LD214 pass. Doing so will enact a tremendous wrong, just when we are trying to make things right.

Thank you for all you do,

Jessica D Linzer

3 Manter St

Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107