



3i Housing of Maine

Independent, Innovative & Integrated Supportive Housing

Paul E. Linet - Founder & President

131st Session of the Maine State Legislature

Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

***April 14, 2023: Statement of Paul Linet, Founder & CEO, 3i Housing of Maine in  
Support of LD 226: An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis***

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, members of the Select Committee. My name is Paul Linet. I am the Founder and CEO of 3i Housing of Maine ("3i HoME"), a 501c3 non-profit headquartered in Topsham. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and to deliver these remarks in strong support of LD 226.

Along with our partner, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), 3i HoME is well along in the local permitting process to develop a totally accessible, affordable housing project to be located in Scarborough at the site of the former harness race track. Those plans are to develop 1, 2 and 3 bedroom affordable rental apartments that will be home to 51 households in which at least one member has a mobility impairment or physical disability. Our 3i HoME model is taken from the core tenets in our name: Independent living through Innovative technology in an Integrated home and community based setting, supported by person-centered coordinated services.

The national affordable housing crisis is well documented and understood. What is less well known, but also acute, is the need for accessible, supportive housing for people with disabilities. Despite the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) being the law of the land for more than 30 years, an antiquated bias still exists that leaves too many people with disabilities homeless or relegated to placement in a diminishing number of inadequately staffed institutions.

The story of the Cannell family featured in the Portland Press Herald on July 24 last year is emblematic of the dire crisis facing thousands of low income families with a member who has a disability. There simply is a lack of affordable AND accessible housing in our state. The consequence for families in Maine, like the Cannells, is life on the streets, or living in vehicles at the Kennebunk rest stop on the Maine Turnpike, or finding a shelter with an opening and the infrastructure to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities, or breaking up the family unit or paying for individuals to cycle through emergency departments and hospitals. This is not the way life should be: not in our state, not in any state. Enactment of LD 226 will provide a path forward so that the 3i HoME model can be built in southern Maine and then be replicated in other parts of the state.

As our plans have become known, we have received dozens of inquiries from individuals throughout the state and elsewhere wanting to know when the Scarborough project will be ready. And we have received expressions of support from municipal leaders in Central Maine

and the Midcoast who believe in our concept and are interested in bringing the 3i HoME model to their community.

In an article entitled “There is a Looming Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities” (The Hill, November 2, 2022) reference was made to the more than 18 million people in the United States eligible for housing assistance but not receiving it. This has been called a “humanitarian crisis”. As in other states, low income people with disabilities in Maine are being excluded from exercising their right to independent living as codified in the ADA because of the absence of accessible housing.

Enacting LD 226 will provide essential funding for projects like the 3i HoME model. This essential funding will bring us closer to the time where all people in the State of Maine can move through the world on their own terms. And as we make these investments in a basic human need, we move closer to the day when headlines like the one concerning the Cannell family – **“Nobody would choose this: A turnpike rest area and a van become home for one Maine family”** will no longer be a part of our regular lexicon.

I urge your support for innovative affordable housing projects like 3i HoME by enacting and for LD 226. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today on this vitally important topic.