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Hello Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. My name is Taylor Cray and I am the Outreach Team Leader for Preble Street's Advocacy Team. I am here today to ask that you please vote in favor of LD226: An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis.

Housing is a cornerstone of stability. Having a safe and consistent place to call home provides a sense of security and safety, allowing individuals and families to go about their lives without having to worry about where they will spend the night. Unfortunately for many Mainers, affordable housing is becoming increasingly unattainable. At Preble Street, we work with individuals who are struggling immensely to access not only housing, but also shelter. The lack of affordable housing options in Maine has led to an increased need for shelter, a need that is proving difficult to meet. With the end of the Emergency Rental Assistance program, we are seeing individuals and families alike struggle to figure out how they will pay their rent without this program. Communities that have been housed in hotels for extended periods of time are now being told that they must leave these spaces, regardless of the fact that many have no other place to go. The growing need for shelter has surpassed the point of crisis; it now feels as though we are consistently living in an emergency. No one in Maine should be forced to live outside due to a lack of affordable housing.

Though not an immediate solution, the creation of more affordable housing will help to alleviate the burden on our shelter system. Not only will building affordable housing provide more options for individuals looking to exit the shelter system, it will also help to prevent folks from becoming homeless. Maine needs 20,000 units of affordable housing to meet the current need. Fortunately, we have multiple developers and construction companies who are ready and able to begin work on these projects. All they require is the funding to do so. Passing LD226 would provide this funding, and begin the process of creating more affordable housing units in Maine. By investing in affordable housing, we are investing in the future of our communities, our neighbors, and our state. I urge you to be a part of this process, and to vote in favor of LD226.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Cray  
Advocacy Outreach Team Leader  
Preble Street