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THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

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*Testimony of Senator Henry Ingwersen in Support of
LD 1609, An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness
Before the Senate Committee on Housing*

Friday, April 21, 2023

Good morning Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. My name is Henry Ingwersen and I represent the good people of Senate District 32, the towns of Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis and Lyman.

I am here today in support of LD 1609, “An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness,” joining school administrators from my district and a community of current and former educators who sincerely care about the success of their students. It is very hard to watch Maine’s housing crisis impact vulnerable students.

The best job I ever had was being a public school teacher for 25 years. Day in and day out, you form strong bonds with the students in your classrooms. You recognize when patterns change and kids are distressed.

Our schools already have McKinny-Vento liaisons on the ground; they are already a key piece in the support network Maine offers families. They are trained. They want to help. Now we just need to ensure they have the resources to do so.

I believe Maine schools can be part of the solution to preventing heartbreaking outcomes, and this fund is key if we’re serious about homelessness prevention.

This session, we all recognize Maine needs to tackle immediate crises and strategize long-term fixes. We know educators are seeing the crisis firsthand. I can think of no better way to make a meaningful impact on the amazing work they do every day. I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you.