

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)  
Supporting L.D. 1426: An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents  
by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance**

Sponsor Representative Kristi Mathieson  
Public Hearing Friday, May 5, 2023 at 10 00am

Chair Baldacci, Chair Meyer, Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Tobin Williamson I live in Lewiston and I am the Advocacy Manager with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a statewide network of almost 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard

MIRC is supportive of L D 1426 because of the structural changes to the General Assistance system it proposes For example

- It removes the burdensome and exploitative task of low-income individuals proving month after month they are in poverty in order to retain their General Assistance eligibility,
- It would align rental payment standards with every other rental payment subsidy in Maine, ensuring G A is not a second tier,
- It would implement some changes to make the Department of Health and Human Services more efficient, such as keeping track of the number of G A applicants and ensuring a 24-hour G A hotline with prompt response times,
- Perhaps most importantly, it would change the reimbursement rate to municipalities to 90% instead of 70% As the most impacted municipalities have seen soaring costs from G A expenditures, this is a vital lifeline to the residents of the communities that have had the hardest impact

We are proud to join partner organizations like the Quality Housing Coalition and Maine Equal Justice in supporting L D 1426 and hope you will do the same Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue

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