

City of Portland | City Council

Kate Snyder, *Mayor*



To: Joint Standing Committee On Health and Human Services

From: Mayor Kate Snyder, City of Portland

Date: 5/5/2023

Re: LD 1664

Testimony in support of LD 1664
“An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program”

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

I write to you on behalf of the City of Portland’s Legislative/Nominating Committee in strong support of LD 1664

General Assistance provides critical temporary financial assistance to low-income individuals and families who are unable to meet their basic needs. This includes people who are experiencing homelessness, unable to work due to a disability, and/or experiencing a temporary crisis. General Assistance is an essential safety net that helps vulnerable individuals and families access basic necessities such as food, shelter, and medical care.

However, many municipalities are struggling to meet the needs of their residents due to lack of resources including, but not limited to, inadequate reimbursement rates from the state, as well as significant increases in demand for emergency shelter. Portland is currently providing General Assistance to approximately 3,800 individuals, between FY19 and FY22, our GA budget increased by 345%, due to an extraordinary increase in individuals’ and families’ need for emergency shelter.

We urge you to increase the General Assistance reimbursement rates from the current 70% to 90% for municipalities as proposed in LD 1664. This will ensure that the program is able to provide the necessary support to all of those who need it around the State of Maine, as well as reduce the strain on local budgets and ensure municipalities are able to continue to deliver other important services and programs.

This is a critical measure that will help to ensure that vulnerable individuals and families have access to the basic necessities they need to survive and thrive. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.