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United Way
of Southern Maine



Hello Chair Baldacci, Chair Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Taylor Cray, and I am the Outreach Team Leader with Preble Street's Advocacy Team. I am here today to ask that you please vote in support of LD 1664: An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program and LD 1732: An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program.

These bills advocate for expanding the State's existing general assistance program to benefit families and individuals in the State of Maine. These bills help to improve Mainers' access to this assistance, both by decreasing the number of times that someone must apply for general assistance, and by helping to reduce confusion, barriers, and inconsistencies in the program. By requiring an overseer to complete training regarding municipal general assistance, LD 1732 will ensure that there is always an individual available who possesses the knowledge and expertise necessary to assist with the often-complicated process of administering general assistance. At a time when the cost of nearly every necessary resource, particularly housing, is rising, it is vital that we ensure that our general assistance program works to benefit all Mainers.

The increase in general assistance reimbursement proposed by LD 1664 will help to correct the current imbalances in general assistance across the state. The increase in state reimbursement from 70% to 90% of general assistance costs will mean that municipalities and tribal governments with less revenue will be able to assist more individuals through the program. This also helps to lessen the financial pressure on municipalities and tribal governments. For individuals and families in need of assistance, the ability to remain within their communities is an incredibly important element of stability and support. By increasing general assistance reimbursement, we can decrease the number of folks who are forced to move to access general assistance. The strength of community is a deeply important aspect of ensuring the health and well-being of Mainers, and these bills will help to ensure that communities are not fragmented due to financial reasons.

I ask that you please vote in favor of both LD 1664 and LD 1732.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Taylor Cray
Preble Street
Advocacy Outreach Team Leader