

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)

Supporting the Combined Public Hearing for:

- **L.D. 1664: An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program (Sponsor: Senator Marianne Moore)**
- **L.D. 1732: An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program (Sponsor: Representative Michele Meyer)**

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

It has become clear to us the reimbursement rate to municipalities should be changed from the current 70% to 90% 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 If it was just one town, it might be different, but the housing crisis has become so widespread that it is now a state issue As such, we encourage more state support to cities and towns that are really struggling to keep up

We are also appreciate of L D 1732 recognizing interpreter services as an additional program cost eligible for state reimbursement MIRC strongly supports language access and are glad to see this is mentioned

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important legislation

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