

Testimony in support of LD 1710

Karina Beadling

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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Housing Committee: my name is karina Beadling, I live in Belfast and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1710."

Maine is a beautiful state with wonderful people, hiding a sad truth: in an age of shrinking housing inventory, stagnating wages, and skyrocketing costs of living, Many of us are struggling to afford housing.

-Please know for each one of us here today, there are thousands more who cannot be here, who right now, are feeling defeated, afraid, and powerless, because they are struggling to afford housing, while maybe facing eviction homelessness... Is this the way life should be?

I am humbled to stand in front of you today as a grateful mother of four who secured safe, sustainable housing for my children and I, last September, through assistance. After years of struggling to find affordable housing, I don't take this for granted.

In my experience searching for affordable housing in Maine, I can say this sincerely: For a family like mine, it's actually almost impossible to find affordable housing in Maine.

After leaving an abusive relationship, i was very motivated to find safe housing for my children and I, so I searched all over the state. At one point, I had a section 8 voucher, but quickly found that landlords were not interested in renting to a tenant with a voucher.. Almost all just said their rental rates were too high, others just never responded if I asked about accepting section 8. It was very frustrating trying to find any landlord that openly accepted it, and ultimately my voucher expired and I had to seek other avenues.

I have always worked to support my family, but in today's rental market, it's no longer possible to work only one job and earn enough to pay rent unassisted. Something needs to give, families and people like me are being squeezed dry... For example, the rent in my three bedroom 1.5 bath in Belfast is \$2000 a month, which is roughly 90% of my income! -I am so grateful to receive housing assistance through New Hope Midcoast, which is a fantastic organization, but without that assistance, we would be homeless.

We cannot neglect to mention that there are coupled problems with rising rents. For me, it would not be possible to work any more than I currently do- thus meeting rising housing costs- because like many Mainers, I don't have childcare, it's almost impossible to find childcare, my son has been on daycare waitlists for years, and he's only 2 ½! Some days I bring him to work, or the statehouse just so I can get some things done.

But this is not about childcare, it's about Mainers being able to afford housing. Shelter is a basic human need, so why are so many neighbors in our great state suffering a crisis of housing affordability of this magnitude? finding a solution will improve the lives of neighbors just like my family and Mainers like us.