

LD 1710

To the Distinguished Members of the Housing Committee:

Testimony in OPPOSITION to LD 1710 "An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and Municipal General Assistance Program"

- My name is Bruce Blackmer from Dedham, Maine.
- I am on the Executive Committee of the Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association, GBAOMA.
- I am also a member of the Legislative Council working closely with, Attorney and Lobbyist, Dan Bernier representing landlords and property owners in, but not limited to, Waterville, Augusta, Portland, South Portland, Lewiston, Auburn, and Bangor areas.
- I have been a landlord since 1972. I have owned a 50-unit trailer park , multi-unit, and single-family homes. At one time, I managed 65 units. I have mostly provided affordable housing to low-income tenants.
- **I am speaking in OPPOSITION of this Bill.**
- I have had voucher tenants for as long as 19 years and as short as 30 days. I use the same lease for all of my tenants. Some years ago Section 8 Housing decided that I should use their lease as an addendum to mine. Since that would be discriminatory to my non-Section 8 tenants I refused to change my way of renting my units, so Section 8 refused to allow their clients to rent from me.
- I have never discriminated against voucher tenants, Section 8 Housing has discriminated against me. This issue wound up in court and the landlords were adjudged that they were not discriminating against voucher tenants if they used the same lease for all of their tenants.
- I have been associated with the Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association for over 30 years. We usually have between 600 and 700 memberships consisting of two members each. That is about 1,200 active apartment managers in all. Over the years we have endured changes proposed by legislators. I cannot say that the housing has improved because of any of these enacted laws. Most changes attempt to benefit the tenant, but landlords are represented by the legislature also. So why are the laws in favor of the tenant? I feel with the housing situation getting worse, it might be beneficial to change your focus and support the landlords. I

have never heard from so many landlords who just want to sell out because of the problems and feeling of hopelessness that would be created LD 1710 were to pass.

- There were numerous bills concerning housing this year. Most were heard by the Judiciary Committee. Through testimony and discussion, the final version of the bill was something most landlords could accept. The Judiciary Committee seemed to understand some of the landlord/tenant relationship and their problems. Which brings up the question of, why are we in this committee with this bill, when many of these issues were settled in the Judiciary Committee.
- The Judiciary Committee heard me say my motto many times, I have never evicted a “good tenant”. I think we should have a new motto. The way to solve the housing situation is to work with the landlords to solve the existing problems, not create new problems that make the landlords want to get out of the business.
- **I urge you to oppose LD 1710**
- Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Bruce Blackmer
14 Enterprise Drive
Dedham ME 04429
email: antsblack1@gmail.com
phone: 207-735-56587