

Testimony in support of LD 1710

Magalie Yangala

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My name is Magalie Yangala, I live in Portland and I am part of the Housing Leadership Team at Maine Equal Justice. I have also worked as a Natural Helper in my community and neighborhood. I am here to speak in support of LD 1710, the HOME Act.

The reason I strongly agree and want this bill to pass, is because the bill really understands the importance of having a peaceful place to call home. It helps both single people and families. It helps people all around Maine. The HOME Act understands the struggle of being homeless. Being homeless is not often voluntary, it happens based on life circumstances.

We don't have a lot of affordable housing in Maine. And rent keeps on going higher and higher. There is a lot of misunderstanding between landlords and tenants. Landlords often abuse the rights of tenants, and because the tenant is so afraid of not being able to find new housing, they do not complain. Tenants are not able to demand their rights be respected, because landlords have so much power. This leaves tenants feeling helpless, and scared, even when they are housed.

Once this bill passes, I believe people will have hope that they will finally get the help they need to be able to afford their rent, and that they will be treated more fairly when applying for housing. It will help improve some of the struggles at General Assistance in Maine as well. It will help New Mainers transition from having to use General Assistance to being financially independent. Once someone gets a job, they need to be able to stay in the

housing they have, but once you start working and lose GA, there is no other safety net to help pay for the unaffordable rent in my community. Something is wrong if a person becomes homeless after losing GA when they are working. It means that affordable housing is not truly affordable compared to the wages of most Maine families. The same apartment that a family was living in while on general assistance must be affordable after GA. With the HOME Act this is possible! We need this safety net now more than ever! The HOME Act is an important way forward for Maine. Thank you.