



Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee: my name is Gina Morin, I am a resident of Auburn and a volunteer leader with the Maine People's Alliance. Our 32,000 members stretch from Kittery to Fort Kent and we believe in a Maine where everyone has what they need, contributes what they can and no one is left behind.

I'm here to testify in favor of LD 1490, "An Act to Reduce Rental Housing Costs by Eliminating Additional Fees at or Prior to the Commencement of Tenancy."

Renters in Maine are struggling to pay the rapidly rising cost of housing in our state. According to Maine Housing, 41.5% of Maine renters are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing. More than two out of five of all renters in Maine earn less than 50% of the Area Median Income. Approximately forty thousand renter households are extremely low-income, of whom nearly 60% are paying more than half their income on rent. These are primarily people who are working, older Mainers, and people with disabilities such as myself.¹

In 2005, I moved to a mobile home park in Oxford. About a year later, a new person started managing the park. That is when all the write ups started. Attached to each write up was a fee. The fees ranged from \$25 to \$65. I lived there for 11 years and the write ups with attached fees never ceased. Before I left the trailer park I was so buried in fees I couldn't decipher whether I was paying rent or fees. Now, imagine being buried in fees before you even begin your tenancy.

After living over four years in a motel room, I just wanted a place to call home. It didn't seem to make a difference when calling for apartments, they wanted application and other fees. That was the biggest barrier that stood between me and an apartment. I would still be living in that motel

¹ <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maine>

if it wasn't for a fellow volunteer. She offered me an apartment with no miscellaneous fees. This is how apartments should be rented.

Housing is a human right. A safe, decent place to call home that folks can afford is the foundation for everything else in our lives. Landlord profit shouldn't be prioritized at the expense of someone's ability to afford a safe, decent home.

We ask this committee to see what a ban on miscellaneous fees could do for folks across Maine by voting ought to pass for LD 1490.

Thank you.