



53 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 202 | Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 866-554-5380 | Fax: 207-775-5727 | TTY: 877-434-7598
aarp.org/me | me@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaine
facebook.com/aarpmaine | instagram.com/aarpme

January 17, 2024

Testimony in Support of LD 337: An Act to Amend the Regulations of Manufactured Housing to Increase Affordable Housing

Greetings Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Standing Committee Housing. I am Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine. Today, I am testifying in support of LD 337.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony.

LD 337 simply put seeks to address Maine's affordable housing crisis by allowing manufactured housing to be located on lots where single-family homes are allowed. As you may have heard time and time again, Maine is in an affordable housing crisis. This housing crisis is affecting nearly all Mainers, and older adults are also at great risk. According to AARP research in 2024 nearly 1,200 adults 45 years old and older are at risk of eviction. Further, nearly 700 adults 45+ are at risk of being unhoused¹. We know that Maine has a nearly 22,498 deficit of needed affordable housing units. This bill is one tool amongst many that we can use to address this crisis and support older adults.²

For older adults in need of affordable housing options, manufactured housing, can be a low-cost, and more widely available alternative to other forms of housing. Nearly, 6.7 million individuals reside in manufactured housing. Of them nearly 3.3 million heads of households are ages 55+ and make up nearly half (48.9 percent) of all households living in manufactured housing.³

Manufactured housing is critical to supporting older adults of a low-income access housing and be able to age in their communities. Older adults living in manufactured housing are more likely to have incomes below the federal poverty level and live alone compared with older adults living in other housing types. In order, to facilitate ways to allow these

¹ Statista/AARP analysis of census data available by United States Census Bureau (USCB)

² <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maine>

³ Gusman, Shannon, and Jennifer Skow. Manufactured Housing as an Affordable Option for Older Adults. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, June 2019. <https://doi.org/10.26419/ppi.00070.001>

individuals to age in place we need to have affordable housing and housing choices in our communities. LD 337 is able to provide that needed change. Manufactured housing, more than 50 percent cheaper to build than new, traditional single-family homes, excluding costs of land.

AARP research has repeatedly shown that older adults wish to age in their home communities. That becomes a challenge when there isn't affordable housing available and lack of housing choice in our communities. The changes proposed in LD 337 will support Maine's goals to address the housing crisis through affordable options, and to become more responsive to the changing needs of all in need of affordable housing, particularly older adults.

We urge this committee to support LD 337 thank you for your time. If you should have questions, I can be reached at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Bridget Quinn
Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach
AARP Maine

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