



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Bill Bridgeo introducing*  
**LD 326, An Act to Increase the Property Tax Exemption Provided to  
Individuals Who Are Legally Blind**  
*Before the Taxation Committee*

Good afternoon, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and distinguished members of the Taxation Committee. My name is Bill Bridgeo, and I represent House District 60, which is part of Augusta. I am here today to introduce and testify in support of **LD 326, An Act to Increase the Property Tax Exemption Provided to Individuals Who Are Legally Blind**.

Last summer, while visiting with a good friend and constituent, Lynn Merrill, I asked her if there was anything I might do as her representative when the 132<sup>nd</sup> convened. She said that indeed there was, and that it had to do with the existing property tax valuation exemption for the blind – an exemption, she advised me, that had not been increased in the more than two decades since she has owned her home in Augusta.

Given the impact that inflation and rising home values has had on reducing the benefit of a statutory \$4,000 exemption in valuation when a blind property taxpayer's bill is calculated, I agreed with Lynn that a reconsideration by the Legislature is overdue. LD 326 would increase the exempted valuation to \$10,000 for tax year 2026 – in my view a modest and warranted adjustment.

I can't think of a more capable spokesperson for Maine's blind and visually impaired community than Lynn Merrill. During my two decades as Augusta city manager, Lynn appeared annually before the City Council's televised meeting to inform the community of National White Cane Safety Day and explain its importance. In her personal life, she has been an inspiration and positive example to many. She was also one of my top students in the public administration courses I taught at UMA.

We've yet to see the fiscal note on this bill, but I doubt that it's a budget-buster and I certainly believe that this modest increase is overdue.

Thank you for your consideration.