

LD 1089, Testimonial, An Act to Permanently fund 55% of the State's Share of Education by Establishing a Tax on Incomes of More than \$1,000,000

Reverend Donna Dolham

Sidney, Maine

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Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Taxation Committee. My name is Donna Dolham, and I live in Sidney. I serve the Unitarian Universalist Community Church as their minister. I'm testifying today in support of LD 1089.

It was about 36 years ago when I first began working with people in my prior social career. I sat in my counseling office offering the best compassion and empathy I could, given my limited understanding of the world. I had begun to understand the challenges facing the vulnerable in our community. People arrived at the counseling office with anxiety, sleep problems and the basic challenges of life that if we live long enough, we ourselves may encounter.

It wasn't until a few years later that I began to understand the inequity in the social fabric of our society as I made home visits throughout central Maine. I crossed the threshold of the homes of those seeking care, safe and permanent housing, employment and recovery. I had been asking the wrong questions in the comfort of my previous office. Initially asking, how are you sleeping, evolved into asking, do you have a bed, do you have transportation, do you have childcare and food. What's getting in the way of you engaging fully in our community?

As a minister and as a Unitarian Universalist, my faith invites me to center equity with the understanding that we are all connected. What happens to the most vulnerable among us tears at the fabric of society. The choices we make and choices you make as our leaders can strengthen Maine now and impact generations to come.

LD 1089, is a moral document, deeply connecting us. LD 1089 will provide services to our neighbors, family and friends who otherwise will not thrive at best and not make it at worst. Passing LD 1089 recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of all Mainers by providing money for education, health care and other necessary services in our communities.

Therefore, I urge the committee to support LD 1089. Thank you for your time.