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Testimony of Representative Suzanne Salisbury presenting
**LD 1178, An Act to Expedite the Process Involving Municipalities
That Illegally Move a Person to Avoid Responsibility for General
Assistance Support**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and esteemed colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Sue Salisbury and I represent House District 128, which includes part of Westbrook. I am here today to present **LD 1178, An Act to Expedite the Process of Involving Municipalities That Illegally Move a Person to Avoid Responsibility for General Assistance Support**.

Welcoming new residents into our communities creates neighborhoods and schools that are richly diverse and strengthens the cores of cities and towns across the state. In my community of Westbrook, our students represent 34 different birth countries and 28 different primary languages. 21% of our students are identified as multilingual learners. Communities are not just welcoming residents from other countries. They are also seeing an influx of individuals who are experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders, and mental and behavioral health issues. As communities navigate welcoming citizens from other countries, states or communities, the conversation returns to how to support them best financially.

This bill is intended to add some “teeth” to the statute that deals with municipality responsibilities. This bill includes:

- Increased penalties for noncompliance;
- Immediate financial consequences and interest accrual;
- Expedited determination and enforcement process;
- Enhanced oversight and accountability;
- Streamlined appeals for impacted municipalities;
- Transparency and public reporting;
- Legal presumption of intent;
- Protection for receiving municipalities.

Communities that are service centers are at the forefront of this issue, and a city councilor from Bangor brought this idea forward. I shared the bill idea with the Mayor’s Coalition and Maine Municipal Association. I received some suggestions and recommended bill changes. I understand

that the Department of Health and Human Services will also provide testimony opposing the bill. I want to work with these three groups to see if, before the work session, we can address some of the issues the bill is trying to tackle and find common ground.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.