

Good afternoon Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn and members of the committee. My name is Jeffrey Stanley from Arrowsic, Maine. I am a client-community board member of Pine Tree Legal Assistance.

I am here today to support L.D. 1022.

I would like to start my testimony today by explaining that you are looking at someone who was homeless with a wife and a young child with health issues. We became homeless due in large part to medical debt and loss of employment. I was a firefighter and due to injuries and subsequent surgeries that took my vocation away, as well as my wife losing her position at the company she worked for for a decade as the business closed all within a 6 month period of time. I tell you this story because it is a common sort of story.

Once I recovered, I dedicated myself to working in Homeless Services and I can assure you the need for Civil Legal Services in the homeless community has never been greater. Homelessness is a National Emergency that isn't being treated as such. The homeless are increasingly being harassed and criminalized just for being homeless though in theory homeless retain their legal rights and freedoms just like you or I.

It takes people to protect those rights and freedoms for them to be realized. Homelessness is a prima facie violation of the right to housing and violates a number of other human rights. From non-discrimination, health, security of the person, and freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment.

I see needs for eviction help including protection against predatory landlord actions, small claims, family law including things like protecting children's rights experiencing homelessness which is how I first learned of Pine Tree Legal Assistance and the help they can provide. The lifeline they and other Civil Legal Services provide will be jeopardized if L.D. 1022 is not passed.

I understand the realities of the difficult fiscal environment you are in as I grew up in this building nearly 50 years ago at the feet of my dad who worked in various positions working

on budgets. I'm inspired to be here by my late cousin former Representative Donna Doore and I ask you to consider that any reduction in funding the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund would be devastating to the Citizens of Maine who can literally and figuratively least afford it.

I urge you to support L.D. 1022, and thank you for your time and consideration.