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Senator, District 18

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development on
LD 1287, An Act to Support Workforce Development by Establishing the
Housing Stability Fund
Friday, April 25**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am proud to cosponsor LD 1287, "An Act to Support Workforce Development by Establishing the Housing Stability Fund."

LD 1287 will provide targeted rental assistance and housing stability for Maine's most vulnerable residents. This thoughtful and impactful legislation not only addresses the immediate needs of low-income households but also aligns with Maine's long-term economic and community development goals.

By offering up to \$3,000 in rental assistance to households earning less than 30% of the area median income, this bill will reach a population often overlooked by traditional housing programs. These residents are at the highest risk of eviction and housing insecurity, and this assistance would make a real and immediate difference in their lives. Preventing eviction is more than a compassionate step, it is a proactive investment in the health and stability of our communities.

Furthermore, there is a clear connection between housing and employment. Stable housing provides the foundation individuals need to maintain jobs and participate fully in the workforce. This legislation supports Maine workers, particularly those in essential roles who too often face housing challenges despite their contributions to the state's economy.

LD 1287 also demonstrates a commitment to responsible and localized program administration. With the Maine State Housing Authority working alongside trusted community organizations, assistance will be delivered efficiently and effectively by those who understand the unique needs of their regions. A cap of 10% on administrative costs ensures the vast majority of funds go directly to renters.

Moreover, this program has already shown success across different parts of the state. In Southern Maine, security deposit assistance has helped stabilize housing, while in Androscoggin County, supplemental rent support has proven to be effective. These localized strategies have strengthened communities, supported local economies, and reduced reliance on public services.

I urge you to support the passage of this bill. It is a practical, compassionate, and fiscally sound response to Maine's housing challenges, and will have a lasting, positive impact on individuals, families, and communities across the state.