

Testimony in Support of LD 1287 – "An Act to Support Workforce Development by Establishing the Housing Stability Fund"

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee. My name is Ellen McFarland, and I live in Portland. I am here today representing ProsperityME.

I am testifying in support of LD 1287, a bill that will promote both housing and workforce stability here in Maine. This bill is crucial for our state's economy and for the well-being of Maine's families, because it recognizes the critical link between **stable housing** and a **stable workforce**.

Maine is facing a severe labor shortage, a problem that is only exacerbated by the state's ongoing housing crisis. To meet the demands of our economy, we need to retain and attract workers, but the lack of affordable housing is making it increasingly difficult for people to stay in their communities and maintain employment.

There's an important example from the existing housing stability program that demonstrates the impact of supporting families through stable housing. Over **300 families** have already been helped by this program, and what's remarkable is that none of those families have returned for additional rental assistance. This success speaks to the strength of the wraparound services offered by local organizations administering the program—services that help families gain long-term stability. It's not just about providing a check for rent; it's about creating an environment where families can thrive, build their futures, and contribute to their communities.

By supporting LD 1287, we can build on this success. The bill would establish the **Housing Stability Fund** and a **Housing Stability Support Program**, ensuring that working families across the state can access safe long-term housing by supporting a security deposit and occasionally some small subsidies required for a few months to get families on their feet financially. This stability will allow them to stay employed, contribute to their communities, and reduce the pressures on local economies. When workers don't have to worry about housing instability, they're more likely to stay in their jobs, reduce turnover, and remain productive members of the workforce.

In Maine, we've always looked out for one another, and LD 1287 continues that tradition. By ensuring that workers can remain housed and stable, we strengthen both our families and our economy. **Investing in housing stability today will save us money tomorrow**, reducing reliance on emergency services and boosting long-term economic growth.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1287. By supporting this bill, we are making a smart, strategic investment in Maine's workforce and its future. Thank you for your time and consideration.