

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Nyawal Lia. I am the statewide coordinator for Housing Justice Maine, a statewide housing coalition that believes housing is a human right. HJM prioritizes actions and policies that support housing as a human right and empower those residents most deeply impacted by an oppressive housing system.

I am here to support LD 1522: *An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program*, which will help Maine families stay on track with rent and strengthen our communities and economies.

HJM has participated in many conversations with people who support this eviction prevention program. I have worked with Housing Justice Maine for almost two years and have been involved with HJM for four years.

The organizations that make up HJM have members from all walks of life—unhoused individuals, low-income individuals, people of color, young people, and senior citizens. The goal of our coalition is to be as diverse as possible.

The eviction prevention bill is something I have been working to advocate for for a long time. We know that housing is a human right, and keeping those who are on the brink of eviction housed is crucial, since becoming unhoused makes it exponentially harder to find housing again.

I urge you, the members of the Housing and Economic Development committee, to vote in support of an expanded and permanent Eviction Prevention Program. All Maine people deserve a permanent place to call home, so that they can be contributing members of society, free from the constant fear of eviction.

I am in favor of LD 1522 - *An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program*

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

[nyawal@mainepeoplesalliance.org](mailto:nyawal@mainepeoplesalliance.org)

Nyawal Lia

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