

*132nd Legislature*  
***Senate  
of Maine***  
*Senate District 32*

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*Testimony of Senator Henry Ingwersen introducing*  
**LD 1996, An Act to Clarify Responsibilities of the State in the Laws  
Governing General Assistance**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*  
*Thursday, January 29, 2026*


Good morning, Representative Meyer, and fellow colleagues on the Committee on Health and Human Services. As you know, I am Senator Henry Ingwersen, and I represent Senate District 32, which includes Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman. Today, I am very pleased to introduce a bill on behalf of the Department, LD 1996, “**An Act to Clarify Responsibilities of the State in the Laws Governing General Assistance.**”

I have sponsored this bill on behalf of the Office for Family Independence, an office within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), of which we are all familiar. This bill removes the specific requirement that DHHS provide overseers of each municipality’s general assistance program access to internet-based, real-time data containing the information necessary to properly determine eligibility of an applicant for GA. The bill also updates certain reporting requirements for the Department.

I know that all of us in this room have a shared desire to improve the availability of data and information regarding the usage of our GA program. It has been a focus of this committee, and I know that it will continue to be. When the Legislature voted in the first session of the 132nd Legislature to approve this specific provision, the separate but accompanying policy that would have provided the necessary appropriations was not approved. As we’ve heard from the Department – and I’m sure they will reiterate this point today – the establishment of an online database is simply too costly. The removal of this requirement will ensure the Department is not out of compliance with the statute moving forward.

I hope that you will join me in supporting this bill. The Department will follow my testimony, and I ask that you hold any questions you may have for the Department.

Thank you.



**Henry Ingwersen**

State Senator, Senate District 32

*Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman*