

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development: my name is Annemarie Morse and I live in Palermo, Waldo County, Maine. I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 2212.

As an adult, I've been homeless twice. I struggle with a mood disorder and other mental and physical health issues, and I end up using a lot of my energy just to keep myself at a baseline of wellness. The first time I lived in my car, I was struggling with med trials and an ill-matched living situation and felt I had no other options.

Then I got stable and I was able to work hard full-time in Lewiston for the last 4 years at sometimes 2 and even 3 jobs with youth and adults in the social field and at Sam's in the kitchen. I lived in a townhouse in Lewiston since the end of 2021 and in 2025 rented out my second bedroom to the wrong people who I ended up asking to leave within a reasonable three month timeframe. Instead of agreeing to do so, they filed a harassment order against me and had me forcibly removed from my own home two weeks after my landlord had just sold her properties to someone who decided to manage them through a third party service.

I was barely able to contact the landlord and communicate what was going on, and even after the court dates these roommates never showed up to, I was faced with paying the rent and power for a month and a half of time when I was not able to sleep in a bed, manage proper hygiene, or be within reasonable driving distance to my main job in Biddeford, and therefore unable to go to work.

Not only did I lose my security deposit, many of my belongings which I can't replace or retrieve, and my home of 4 years, I also lost my hard fought for stability. Even now, after a year of being forced to leave my home, I'm currently living in a shed on my family's land, of which I'm grateful for because it could be worse, and I know it is for some people.

I'm sharing my story to ask that the members of this committee move to fully fund emergency rental assistance in the Eviction Prevention Program. No one should have to face houseless-ness because of extenuating circumstances beyond their control, and I believe Maine should take strong steps to making housing a human right for all, and not just a privilege for the financially capable, which I know we can do if we include tax fairness clauses in this work. Thank you.