

Michelle Lamm
Portland
LD 210

Public Testimony on LD 210^[11]_[SEP] Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and
Financial Affairs

^[11]_[SEP] Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Distinguished Members of the
Committee:

My name is Michelle Lamm and I am the Executive Director for Greater Portland Family Promise. I am here today to testify in strong opposition to Part S of the budget proposal, which includes harmful cuts to the General Assistance (GA) program. GA is a critical safety net that helps keep families housed, ensuring that vulnerable members of our community have access to basic needs like shelter, food, prescriptions, and utilities.

Maine has a responsibility to exercise humanity and stewardship over its public benefit programs. These programs are designed not only to protect families in crisis but also to set them up for future success. Cutting GA funding contradicts these values and jeopardizes the well-being of countless families across our state.

The proposed three-month limit for assistance is simply not enough. The reality is that landlords are unlikely to accept tenants with such short-term assistance, leaving families with no viable options for stable housing. We are already witnessing alarming rates of hunger, homelessness, housing instability, and evictions. Weakening the GA program will only exacerbate these issues, pushing more Maine families into homelessness.

When one family suffers, our entire community suffers. The cost of homelessness and poverty extends beyond the immediate impact on affected individuals; it strains emergency services, hospitals, and shelters and ultimately increasing the financial burden on the state. Investing in GA is not just the right thing to do morally—it is also fiscally responsible in the long term.

I urge you to reject these proposed cuts and instead work toward strengthening Maine's GA program to better support families in need. A strong GA program reflects our shared values of compassion, dignity, and community support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle