

Livka Farrell
Rockland
LD 698

When I began volunteering on a Domestic Violence Resource Center helpline in 2023, I was shocked and saddened by how very many clients and their children were experiencing homelessness as a direct result of domestic abuse. As the helpline is a low-barrier service, I also spoke with countless neighbors who weren't experiencing domestic violence, but were simply searching for an open bed at an emergency shelter with no success. Even after calling each individual shelter in the state every single day for weeks, clients often couldn't secure a place for themselves!

People experiencing homelessness are still human beings, and deserve our care, respect, and assistance to get their immediate needs met. Domestic violence, sexual assault, mental health issues, addiction, physical health issues, and criminal backgrounds can all keep Maine families from securing and sustaining stable housing and employment. The stress on our shelter system is immense due to the Maine affordable-housing crisis in particular, and I applaud the legislature for making every effort to ease the burden on these vital institutions. Please help keep emergency shelters open!