

PRESQUE ISLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

43 North Street, Suite 2
Presque Isle, ME 04769
(207) 764-4476
Fax (207) 764-6139

Chris Hayes
Chief of Police



State of Maine - 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Chris Hayes of Presque Isle, Maine
March 13, 2025
Supporting:
LD698, "An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine"

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development:

Testimony of Chris Hayes
Chief of Police
Presque Isle, Maine

In Support of LD698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine

Senators, Representatives, and distinguished members of the committee,

My name is Chris Hayes, and I am testifying today on behalf of both myself and my community in support of LD698, An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine. I appreciate the opportunity to address this important issue.

Presque Isle, a small city in Northern Maine, is home to a significantly large homeless population. Given the severe weather conditions we face in our region, maintaining access to a homeless shelter is not just beneficial, but essential for the well-being and safety of our most vulnerable residents.

Rural areas like ours are often underserved when it comes to social services, food assistance, and mental health care. Consequently, law enforcement officers become one of the few resources available to homeless individuals. Without the support and shelter that our facilities provide, many of these individuals may resort to trespassing on private property or engaging in minor offenses simply to seek warmth or safety. Shelters offer a legal and safe alternative, relieving both individuals in need and local law enforcement from unnecessary and avoidable complications.

In addition to providing immediate shelter, homeless shelters also play a crucial role in connecting individuals with essential treatment services for mental health issues and

PRESQUE ISLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

43 North Street, Suite 2
Presque Isle, ME 04769
(207) 764-4476
Fax (207) 764-6139

Chris Hayes
Chief of Police



substance abuse, services that law enforcement is not equipped to provide. Shelters in rural areas, such as ours, also support victims of domestic violence when other shelters, such as Hope and Justice, are at capacity. The closure of our Aroostook County Homeless Shelter would have a devastating impact on our community, further limiting the resources available to those who are already most in need.

I strongly urge you to vote **Ought to Pass** on LD698 and ensure the continued support of our homeless shelters.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Hayes 
Chief of Police, Presque Isle