

Susan Kiralis-Vernon
Vassalboro
LD 1522

Testimony of Susan Kiralis
In Support of LD 1522: An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program
Presented to the Maine State Legislature

Good afternoon, Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committee.

My name is Susan Kiralis, and I live in Vassalboro, Maine. I'm here today as a Aspire Leadership Team member and as a neighbor who sees, every day, the rising need for safe, stable housing in Maine.

LD 1522 is not just a bill. It's a lifeline.

Poverty levels in Central Maine remain unacceptably high, and for many of us—especially Black and immigrant communities—the barriers to simply renting a home are overwhelming. We are too often met with credit checks we can't pass, rental histories we were never given a chance to build, and a system that seems designed to keep us out.

That's why we need this Eviction Prevention Program. But we must go further.

Let this program be permanent—a fixed part of Maine's budget and our moral responsibility. Equip homes supported by this program with access to broadband Wi-Fi, a phone desk, a chair, and a basic learning station. In today's Maine, our homes must be places where children can study, adults can work remotely, and entire families can grow in dignity.

We also need to address deeper roots—through land ownership initiatives, low federal-interest lending programs, and reparation-based grant funding to ensure historically excluded communities have the opportunity to own, not just rent, in Maine.

I urge this legislature—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—to support LD 1522 as a bipartisan measure. Let's run this message across every public radio and local paper in the state: Maine is serious about housing justice.

All Mainers deserve a safe place to call home. That's not charity. That's a basic human right.

Thank you for your time. I'm open to any questions, and I respectfully urge you to take an intricate look at this bill—and do the right thing.