

LD 1287: An Act to Support Workforce Development by Establishing the Housing Stability Fund

Dear Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Ned Payne, and I live in Portland, Maine. I'm writing today as a lifelong Mainer and a landlord who cares deeply about the well-being of our communities. I support LD 1287 because I believe it offers a smart, cost-effective way to strengthen Maine's housing system and, in turn, our workforce and economy.

As a landlord, I've seen firsthand how housing instability can ripple through families and neighborhoods. Tenants who are worried about making rent or facing eviction can't focus on their jobs, education, or family life. At the same time, landlords like myself depend on stable, reliable tenants. Housing security benefits everyone.

Maine's labor shortage is no secret—and housing is at the heart of the problem. Without enough affordable and stable housing options, we can't attract or retain the workers we need in every sector, from education and healthcare to construction and hospitality.

- According to the Maine Development Foundation, our labor force dropped by about 26,000 people during the height of the pandemic. While it has since rebounded, deeper trends—like an aging population and outmigration—continue to threaten our workforce.
- A shrinking pool of working-age Mainers puts strain on our economy. We must do more to keep young people here, draw in new talent, and support residents who want to work but are held back by lack of housing.

LD 1287 tackles these challenges head-on by establishing the Housing Stability Support Program and Housing Stability Fund. These initiatives will:

- **Stabilize families** by helping them stay housed during periods of hardship.
- **Support employers** by ensuring workers have a reliable home base from which to contribute to their jobs and communities.
- **Strengthen Maine's economy** by making housing more accessible and workforce participation more feasible for more people.

This isn't just a housing bill—it's an economic development strategy rooted in compassion and practicality. Mainers have always looked out for one another in tough times. LD 1287 builds on that tradition by providing tools to prevent homelessness, reduce displacement, and keep people rooted in the places they live and work.

If we want Maine's economy to grow, we need to invest in the people who power it. Housing is a basic need—and without it, our workforce challenges will only get worse.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1287 and take a meaningful step toward a more stable, prosperous future for all Mainers.

Sincerely,
Ned Payne
Portland, ME