

Testimony in Support of LD 1287

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Robby Perkins-High, and I work as the Director of Housing Initiatives for ProsperityME. I also serve on Portland's CDBG Allocation Committee and as a Board Member for Ketcha Outdoors, and am a resident of Portland.

I write to you today in support of LD 1287, a bill that will provide housing stabilization for Maine's most vulnerable renters. This policy is both fiscally and morally sound, and would provide a crucial source of funding to address Maine's housing crisis.

From a financial perspective, a 2025 Shelter Cost study from MaineHousing estimated that the minimum cost of a family shelter bed in the state was \$17,583 per year, with some areas of the state seeing significantly higher costs. This program would limit assistance to \$3,000 per household, which would be leveraged to allow families to stay in their current housing. With minimal financial support, the state can support the most affordable method of addressing homelessness: preventing it from happening in the first place. The bill also limits administrative costs to 10%, meaning that almost all of this investment will flow to the people who need it the most, adding to the efficiency of the program.

Outcomes from ProsperityME's prior work show how effective this program can be. In pilot work with similar funding, the average length of support needed was just four months before clients became self-sufficient. Of all clients served, there were none that came back for additional funding. This is not a program that people will rely on in the long-term to pay their bills, or one where the problem will persist after their participation. This is a small amount of support that allows families and individuals to keep things on track when something knocks them off course.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of this program that will keep Mainers housed, in a cost-effective way for the state, allowing them to continue to contribute to their communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.