



5/1/2025

Support for LD 1723, *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Manufactured Housing Communities to Prevent Excessive Rent and Fee Increases*

Dear Sen. Curry, Rep. Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Craig Saddlemire, and I am the Development Organizer for the Raise-Op Housing Cooperative in Lewiston, Maine. We are a resident-owned housing organization with 5 apartment buildings, home to 33 different households, and 90 residents, a majority of whom are low-income. I am here to testify in support of LD 1723.

Manufactured housing communities are an essential component to keeping low and moderate income people in affordable homes. We have manufactured housing communities throughout the state in our cities as well as our rural towns. Because manufactured housing is typically fixed to leased land, the homeowners are extremely vulnerable to price gouging by park owners. By limiting rent increases to a reasonable level, LD 1723 will help protect residents of manufactured housing from unfair rent hikes, and also possibly dissuade some of the more greedy out-of-state firms from buying these parks altogether. The best part about LD 1723 is that it can create essential housing stability and also be implemented for little to no cost to the state, except for possibly increased administrative support to the Manufactured Housing Board.

Those of us who own single-family homes and pay property tax understand how upsetting it can be to see property taxes increase quickly. But at least our local budget and property tax is controlled by elected officials who are accountable to voters, and there is a public process to influence their decisions, and most of the decision makers involved in that process are impacted as taxpayers themselves. Imagine that - instead of local elected officials - your property taxes were raised arbitrarily by a private equity firm in California, who felt no obligation to explain why your taxes were increasing twice as high as last year, but for the justification that they have the lawful right to make as much profit from the land below your home as they desire, and who can evict you for nonpayment with just a 45 day notice to quit. While there may have been a time when park owners did not consider such practices within the bounds of reason, times have changed. In the eyes of the market, housing is increasingly becoming a global asset to be traded and manipulated, rather than a personal necessity and the foundation for a family's economic and social livelihood. I think it's time we get back to those old ideas that truly value the role of the home in a good society. For these reasons, I hope you will move LD 1723 ought to pass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Saddlemire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Saddlemire
Cooperative Development Organizer
Raise-Op Housing Cooperative