



Testimony in Support of LD 1910: An Act to Strengthen Housing Stability Services by Increasing Support and Outreach

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development Committee

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Senator Curry Senator Bailey and Senator Bennett - distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Noelle Coyne, and I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 1910: An Act to Strengthen Housing Stability Services by Increasing Support and Outreach.

Maine's homelessness crisis has reached a tipping point. Shelters across the state are full or overflowing. Communities are seeing unprecedented numbers of people who are unsheltered or living in encampments, often for extended periods. What we're witnessing is not just a housing shortage, but a breakdown in the systems that are meant to help people move from crisis to stability.

LD 1910 addresses this head-on by funding 9 outreach caseworkers and 9 housing stability workers, trained, community-based professionals who are urgently needed to connect people to housing and support services. These workers will be strategically distributed across the state, focusing on areas with the greatest need.

This bill is more than a staffing proposal. It is a blueprint for system repair and recovery. Right now, people experiencing homelessness interact with multiple fragmented systems - emergency rooms, jails, shelters, with little coordination or follow-through. LD 1910 ensures that skilled professionals can provide continuity of care, helping people navigate complex systems and stay on the path to housing.

These roles are exactly what the Statewide Homeless Council, the Maine Continuum of Care, and the Maine Homeless Policy Committee have called for. They are essential for unblocking our clogged homeless response system, where shelters remain full because there are too few workers to help people move on to permanent housing.

Housing Stability Workers do more than secure a roof over someone's head, they help people stay housed. Through relationship-building and trust, they provide the kind of consistent, individualized support that is often missing for people who have experienced long-term homelessness.

Outreach Caseworkers meet people where they are quite literally. Whether in a tent encampment, under a bridge, or at a warming center, they connect individuals to health care, housing programs, and other essential supports. Without this front-line engagement, many people remain invisible to the system.

Assisting people in eliminating barriers to self-sufficiency and improving their quality of life.

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We also know that failing to act comes at a cost, both human and financial. It is far more expensive to repeatedly treat people in emergency rooms or jails than it is to support them in stable housing. LD 1910 is a smart, compassionate, and cost-effective investment.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support LD 1910 and vote it out of committee with a strong recommendation. It's time we gave our homelessness response system the staffing and support it needs to actually work.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully,
Noelle Coyne

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