

Hello, my name is Justin Price, and I serve as an Assistant Shelter Manager at the Mid Maine Homeless Shelter. I am writing to respectfully urge your support for LD 2124.

I have worked at Mid Maine Homeless Shelter for four years and have seen firsthand how stable shelter services can change lives. Our organization has grown into a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment for individuals experiencing homelessness. However, the long-term sustainability of our services remains at risk due to inadequate and inconsistent funding.

Our shelter serves upwards of 75 individuals every day in a 48-bed facility. While the one-year funding provided through LD 698 for 2025 helped keep our doors open, it was only a temporary measure. Residents frequently express fear about the possibility of shelter closures, and without long-term solutions, I am unable to provide them with meaningful reassurance.

The closure of the Alfred County Adult Shelter last year due to lack of funding is a sobering example of what can happen when support falls short. I, along with several residents, stood at the State House during that time in a peaceful protest, hoping for intervention that ultimately did not come. I fear that many other providers, including our own, may face similar outcomes without legislative action.

When shelters, hospitals, or primary care offices close, the impact extends far beyond those facilities. Closures increase instability for vulnerable individuals and place additional strain on municipalities, hospitals, and frontline workers. Despite these pressures, shelter staff continue to show up every day to support those in need.

The state's core operating subsidy has not increased since 2016, forcing nonprofit shelters to rely heavily on donations and fundraising to cover rising costs. Even with the temporary increase under LD 698 to \$19 per night, providers like ours remain approximately \$83 per individual per night below the actual cost of care.

Passage of LD 2124 would provide critical, sustainable support to shelters across the state and help ensure that providers can continue offering safe, humane, and effective services. Investing in shelter funding is not only fiscally responsible—it is a reflection of our shared commitment to dignity, stability, and opportunity for Maine's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration of this important issue. I appreciate your attention to the real-world impact this legislation will have on providers, staff, and the individuals we serve.

Respectfully,
Justin Price

Assistant Shelter Manager
Mid Maine Homeless Shelter