



Raise-Op Housing Cooperative
145 Pierce Street, Office 102
Lewiston, ME 04240
www.raiseop.com

2/09/2026

Testimony in favor of LD 2124

*An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using
Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax*

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable 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. Founded in 2008, we are Maine's oldest, urban, multi-unit housing cooperative. Today, we own 5 apartment buildings, home to 33 different households, and 90 residents. We also provide technical assistance to new housing cooperatives and seek to promote more resident ownership of housing throughout Maine.

Over the past 2 years, our organization has played a leadership role in supporting the creation of Lewiston's first 24/7 low-barrier adult shelter. In the course of doing so, it was shocking to see how little support there is from the state in the form of consistent funding for shelter operations. Homelessness is a statewide issue, and it takes a statewide effort to address it adequately. Local service communities are bringing many resources to the table to address it, but they greatly need reliable support from the state to sustain their operations, or else more of our shelters will end up like York County Adult Shelter, which closed in May of 2025. Rumford Area Group Homes is facing a similar situation if more state resources cannot be made available.

We support LD 2124 because it increases annual funding to shelters in Maine and it also identifies the funding mechanism to do so, a portion of the Real Estate Transfer Tax.

We urge committee members to vote in favor of LD 2124.

Please be in touch with any questions.

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
craigs@raiseop.com
(207) 200-1596