

Betsy Williams
Brunswick
LD 2124

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee. My name is Betsy Williams, I live in Brunswick and I am writing in support of LD 2124, an act to support emergency shelter funding.

As a Unitarian Universalist I speak from a faith tradition that centers love of neighbor and respect for the worth and dignity of every human being. We are not alone: many—if not all—people of faith look to their civic leaders to honor these same core tenets through public policies. LD 2124 provides such an opportunity for you today.

Emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness provide a level of safety and comfort to our most vulnerable populations, adults and children alike. As one who has provided meals to our local shelter, I've seen the tremendous effort needed to keep the door open. But volunteers like me can only do so much. And short-term infusions (like last year's funding through LD 698) are simply that—short term. Closures follow in their wake.

Emergency shelter closures have economic and social impacts beyond the increase in human suffering. They put pressure on local police, EMS, hospitals and, of course, other shelters that are already at capacity. All these pressures mean more tax dollars spent on bad outcomes for those experiencing homelessness and the people trying to help them. This cycle can be broken with a focus on long term solutions, such as LD 2124.

Passage of LD 2124 will provide stable and consistent state, local and regional partnerships, giving Maine a well-coordinated and fiscally responsible way to keep emergency shelters functioning. Please vote Ought to Pass. Thank you.