

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence
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April 20, 2021

Senator Ned Claxton, Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 1301 – An Act To Support Transitional Housing for Persons Experiencing Abuse, Dangerous Living Conditions, Economic Insecurity Due to Divorce or Separation, Chronic Homelessness, Substance Use Disorder or Mental Disorders

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

This letter is to provide information regarding LD 1301, which directs the Department to coordinate and arrange services for transitional housing, job training, and health care services for individuals in need who are experiencing crisis related to various circumstances such as abuse, dangerous living conditions, economic insecurity due to divorce or separation, chronic homelessness, substance use disorder or mental disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder. This bill also proposes ongoing appropriation of \$8,000,000 of General Fund beginning fiscal year 2022-2023.

The department currently provides these proposed services through other programs, some offered within the Office for Family Independence (OFI). The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program¹ provides for assistance with transitional housing, and the Department provides job training assistance through the Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE)², Food Supplement Employment and Training (FSET)³ and Higher Opportunities for Pathways to Employment (HOPE)⁴ programs. The Department also provides guidance, training, and municipal reimbursements for the General Assistance⁵ program, which assists individuals with basic necessities including temporary and long-term housing.

This bill proposes the department coordinate and arrange for services which are already provided in other programs of OFI. The proposed services would be duplicative of what is already offered and the coordination of additional and like services would require significant resources. This program would necessitate extensive resources dedicated to

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c331.docx>

² <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c607.docx>

³ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c609.doc>

⁴ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c330.docx>

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/144/144c323.docx>

developing, implementing, managing, overseeing and evaluating the program as well as meeting any technology needs.

The Department opposes this bill due to the significant fiscal impact this bill proposes. Additionally, this bill is duplicative of other programs within the Office for Family Independence in regard to supportive funding for housing (TANF, GA) and training services (ASPIRE, FSET, HOPE).

We wanted you to be aware of the above information as you consider this bill going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Pelotte".

Anthony Pelotte, Director
Office for Family Independence