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Testimony of Holly B. Stover in support of
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
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Holly Stover and I represent House District 89, including the towns of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport, Edgecomb, Westport Island and South Bristol in the House of Representatives. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **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.**

Lincoln County has an estimated population of 34,634 (2019), making us the fourth smallest county population in the state of Maine. We do not have a service center and are critically under resourced with social services and other supports. In Lincoln County, there is no continuum of housing and affordable housing is nearly extinct. There are little to no rental housing and there are no shelter options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In Lincoln County, 12% of our population live at or below the poverty guidelines. In our communities, there are people living in abject poverty and extreme wealth. This creates tremendous economic disparities that make the lift from poverty even more difficult. There is a public perception that we do not have people living in poverty here and that is a disservice to the neediest and most disenfranchised among us. Ensuring adequate resources are in place for people is critical and LD 1301 could provide essential support and mobilize significant resources that currently do not exist.

LD 1301 provides funding to help low income, vulnerable people with the resources they need to navigate the challenges of life with grace and dignity. The services will address employment and housing to help people build additional resources so they may lead lives of independence and self-sufficiency.