



Creating and supporting quality housing opportunities for those in need in Maine.

Dear Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and esteemed members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing:

At the outset, I want to thank you for your body of work this session and your dedication to solving Maine's housing crisis. I am the Executive Director at Quality Housing Coalition, a position I have held since 2018. At QHC, our mission is to create and support quality housing opportunities for those in need in Maine. QHC's direct services flagship program is Project HOME, a scattered site supportive housing program that unlocks access to Maine's existing housing stock to individuals and families that have experienced homelessness. Project HOME does this by partnering with landlords to accept housing vouchers and subsidies and remove application barriers, and by supporting tenants to be successful through year-long housing stabilization services and connections to resources.

Our housing stabilization team at Project HOME takes a public health approach to housing and works in collaboration with school and community partners, including McKinney Vento Liaisons, municipal and state officials, general assistance offices, housing authorities and community services organizations to provide the support needed to be successful in their permanent housing. The Project HOME team works with each individual and family to navigate and coordinate all of the systems they rely on to pay for their housing and essential needs, including General Assistance, Section 8, TANF, BRAP, employment, and behavioral health care services.

To date, Project HOME has provided over 550 households to over 1200 adults and children with permanent housing with a 99% success rate from 2018 through the end of 2022. In 2022, we provided 250 units of housing to Project HOME households with our 32 landlord partners in 5 counties (York, Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc and Kennebec). In the Low Income Housing Tax Credit world, 250 households is the equivalent to the construction of five affordable housing developments in just one year.

We support LD 2 because for the 1% of individuals and households that have failed Project HOME's scattered site supportive housing services, it is because they required consistent

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year-long behavioral health and health care services to address their severe and persistent mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Although Project HOME provides 24/7 off-site case management and community health worker services to address behavioral related lease violations, when severe behavioral health needs arise that put the tenant at-risk of eviction, it typically coincides with the end of the time-limited case management through Section 13 of MaineCare and Rapid Rehousing provided by our partner social service agencies.

In summary, we are supportive of this bill and also support amendments that align the State definition of homelessness with the national definition and to allow this funding to provide supportive services in scattered-site housing first as well as in site-based housing first models.

Thank you again for all of your work.

Sincerely,

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