

**TESTIMONY OF THE WESTBROOK COMMUNITY HOUSING COALITION**  
SUPPORTING LD 1609: An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness

*Public Hearing: Friday, April 21 at 9:00am*

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing,

I am Liz Eisele McLellan, one of the co-chairs of the Westbrook Community Housing Coalition. We are a group of community members, faith leaders, school and city representatives, and nonprofit organizations that have been working together to address the housing crisis within Westbrook.

We work closely with the McKinney-Vento Liaison for the Westbrook School Dept. At last count Westbrook had more than 100 students that were considered unhoused. This is the highest the number has been all year.

Last month, a father and his young daughter spent the night on the streets before coming to the attention of her school. We were able to fundraise from the community enough money to cover a week in a hotel for them, before our network was able to get them placed in an apartment. While this was a success for our community, it also shows the need for additional McKinney-Vento funding.

We have collected Hannaford and Market Basket gift cards to be delivered to unhoused high school students. Our members have collected sleeping bags and backpacks that are delivered to the school. Again, this shows the need for additional McKinney-Vento funding.

A program that is still being funded at a level approved in the 1980's, is far behind being able to adequately support the needs of unhoused students during an epic housing crisis. Our students need the safety and stability of a home in order to thrive. Anything we can do to get them closer to that existence is well worth it. After all, they are the future.

Thank you.

Liz Eisele McLellan,  
on behalf of the Westbrook Community Housing Coalition