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Staff Contacts

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Development Officer

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Development Officer

April 21, 2023

Re: LD 1609, An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Cullen Ryan, and I am the Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine or CHOM. CHOM's small staff works collaboratively with service providers all across Maine to house hundreds of people experiencing homelessness. I am a member of the Statewide Homeless Council and also chair the Maine Homeless Policy Committee, the Maine Continuum of Care Board of Directors, and the ESAC Long Term Stayers Committee. Prior to moving to Maine, 10 years of my career was spent working with homeless youth in Vermont and Minnesota.

I am testifying in support of LD 1609, An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness. The bill would enact provisions of law to prevent student homelessness. I reviewed the concept draft and have learned that Representative Brennan's bill LD 1422 will be pulled. That leads me to be even more supportive of this legislation.

We can't prevent everything. But in this case, with some limited funds, we can surgically target some resources to keep families housed so students can be successful. That seems like a wise investment in both homeless prevention and positive outcomes for our youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Cullen Ryan
Portland
LD 1609

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