

May 12,2023

Good morning, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and Honorable Housing Committee Members.

My Name is Kandie Cleaves and I reside in Garland. I am here today to testify in favor of

LD 1710 “An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program.”

My husband and I together have 5 children renting in Maine as well as a grandchild. The oldest resides in Bangor and her and her fiancé pay well over 50% of their income for the home they live in. There is no yard for our 8 yr. old granddaughter to play in, and the neighborhood frequently requires law enforcement to visit the homes around them.

The next oldest is now a single mother of three active boys. They reside in Brooksville. She has a home that while married was affordable on a two-person income. She now pays over 50 % of her income towards rent. She attempted to move back closer to us so that we could assist in childcare when needed, however even the places that were not as big as she was looking for were gone before she could even go view them. Childcare where she lives is scarce and costly, forcing her to only be able to take jobs that work around the hours her kids are in school or where it will require the oldest to only have a short time to watch them. The market was already hard to find a home in her area when she got this one. Ideally, she would have liked to have at least one bedroom on the ground floor. At age 17 her tendons in her right foot were completely lacerated and she has been left with a foot that frequently drops. After falling down her stairs several times her bedroom is now in the Livingroom. n

Our son and his family live in the Southwest Harbor, they have moved from place to place staying with others for over two years now. They lost their last place due to issues created by his girlfriend's mental health. This has made it even harder to find a place which in a community lacking in options, yet they don't leave the area due to the jobs they have.

Our two youngest live together with another room mate in Lewiston. Sharing the rent 3 ways is the only reason the rent is under 50% of their income.

Our grandchild had a reasonably priced apartment that had to be moved out of due to severe maintenance issues with heat and water. And finally had to decide to rent a room from a co-worker after finding no other options that were not well over 50% of income. The living environment is less than ideal in the current situation.

We have a severe shortage across the state when it comes to truly affordable housing as well as affordable handicap accessible housing. This is forcing some working families to move to the streets. Ironically many people who have homes choose to go camping and it is seen as fun, and recreational. Yet when someone does it out of necessity they are looked down upon by a large portion of society. And treated in a manner that often makes it more difficult for them to find a place. I personally think society should place more value on everyone having a home rather than some having multiples.

In closing I ask that you vote to pass LD 1710

Kandie Cleaves

Garland