

Meaghan Harned  
Portland  
LD 1867

Meaghan Harned in support of LD 1867: Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority

Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, I am Meaghan Harned and I am writing today in support of LD 1867, Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority.

I am a renter in Portland, and I am increasingly aware of the glaring discrepancy between market prices and what a middle- to low-income individual or family is able to afford. We can see it playing out right now on the June municipal ballot in Portland, where landlords are arguing to be able to raise rents without limit when a unit turns over. There will ALWAYS be people willing to pay those market rates. But those people are NOT the poor or working class of Portland.

Right now, landlords and developers are incentivized to raise prices as high as the market allows because it's simply more profitable for them. Meanwhile, folks are getting priced out and often forced out left and right. The free market is failing us in this area of basic need for shelter.

This bill represents the opportunity for Maine families to access housing that is safe, secure, and affordable - a reprieve from the harsh economy that has driven soaring prices for often subpar housing - while ultimately funding, through their monthly rent payments, the creation of more such housing. I believe that this bill could be one important prong of the multi-pronged effort to relieve the pressures of this crushing housing crisis and move one step closer to making sure that all our neighbors, new and old, have roofs over their heads. Thank you for your time.