

*Patricia Washburn in support of*

**LD 1867, Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing*

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, I am Patricia Washburn and I am here today to speak in support of **LD 1867, Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority.**

I live in downtown Portland and I see every day how many people are struggling to find and afford housing. This is not just those who are down and out. The housing crisis has swallowed up people with jobs, people who are sober and responsible, people who ask nothing more than to have a roof over their heads to pursue their lives. We absolutely cannot stand by and allow it to continue.

In order to having a thriving economy, we need to provide stable places to live for people at all income levels. I am fortunate and privileged to live near two high-quality hospitals, but what good is that if people who work in health care, housekeeping, and all the other jobs that keep a hospital going cannot afford to live here? I am fortunate and privileged to live in one of the nation's most amazing restaurant towns, but how much longer can we cater to the tourist trade without places where waitstaff, dishwashers, and cooks can live? I am disabled and need help with daily life, but it is nearly impossible to find someone to provide it because people cannot afford to take jobs in caregiving.

This bill will ensure more units are created for low- and moderate-income Maine families. It's not just a matter of compassion – although that alone SHOULD be enough – it's a matter of keeping our economy working.

I encourage you to support this bill and a wide range of other possible solutions to our housing crisis, as a matter of fairness to all Mainers. Thank you.