

Nancy B Chandler
Topsham
LD 2158

Dear Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Committee, I am Nancy B Chandler, a resident of Topsham, who has volunteered for 4 years at the Gathering Place day center in Brunswick, which has also operated a chair only emergency shelter for the past two winters. I also have given significant financial support towards Tedford Housing building a combined office, 24 bed men and womens' shelter rooms and 10 family units in Brunswick this year. I go to church in Lewiston each week, where homeless people regularly use our garden and doorstep during the day and get meals from the Jubilee Center located in our building. It was heartbreaking to see veterans, single women sleeping in our dooryard, with all their possessions getting wet and suffering from cold and illness, continuously exposed to harsh weather without adequate clothing. LD2138 will start the process of Maine accessing Medicaid and Medicare funding for unhoused people with substance use and/or mental health disorders and elderly and disabled people with medical needs.

Federal funds will be essential, in addition to LD2136 allocating an additional \$10 million, to support Maine's 42 homeless shelters adequately, especially the low barrier shelters.

With 26% of households in Tedford Housing's service area between Brunswick and Rockland not able to pay their rent, our area is experiencing many families with children losing their housing. The financial crisis of working families unable to afford housing has grown so great that the assistant principal at Bath High School works full-time on serving children from those families.

Please pass both LD2136 to increase operating subsidies to Maine homeless shelters, and LD2138 to access federal funding for the medical needs of unhoused seniors, people with disabilities and people suffering from substance use and/or mental health disorders.