



Maine Municipal Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 787 - An Act to Create the New Maine Resident Service Coordination Program in the Department of Economic and Community Development

March 21, 2023

Sen. Curry, Rep. Roberts, and distinguished members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony neither for nor against, LD 787, *An Act to Create the New Maine Resident Service Coordination Program in the Department of Economic and Community Development*, on behalf of Maine Municipal Association which represents the collective interests of municipal government before the legislature. The positions of the Association are determined by our 70 member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), who are elected by the selectboards and councils in the 35 Senate districts of Maine, thus represent the widest possible experiences of the impact of state policy on municipal government operations.

Many of the municipal officials who reviewed LD 787 questioned why another layer of bureaucracy was necessary. They are currently navigating between multiple non-profit organizations and housing organizations to connect “New Mainers” with services in their local communities. They agree this is often challenging and communicating with the multiple different entities can be problematic and frequently NGO communication leaves out municipal partners in their service delivery. However, they are not sure that adding a state layer to this issue, particularly when each community has a different set of resources available, will lead to better interagency communication. Municipal staff that are managing these service connections currently, could certainly use more investment in additional staff to support their work. They are unresourced at the local level.

Some communities have not been included in conversations around the movement of individuals from one community to another by state efforts until after the state has negotiated with a housing provider and the school system has been made aware of additional student enrollment. These are they types of unhelpful assistance that has been the experience of municipal government where state intervention or assistance has occurred.

Officials believe centralized information may be helpful, but only if the multiple non-profit and community organizations that are involved in the service delivery are held to the same standards as the municipalities they service with regard to consistent reporting, municipal coordination and available resources. Adding another reporting duty on top of these overworked municipal departments currently will not be helpful. To the maximum extent possible, officials ask that if the committee proceeds with LD 787 that is also direct the department to work with municipal government and shoulder more of the tasks that are occurring at the local level rather than create an additional level of bureaucracy for an already overwhelmed municipal service.