



Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee: my name is Cate Blackford. I have the pleasure of serving as the public policy director for the Maine People's Alliance. Thank you for the chance to speak again today and urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 701.

MPA supports An Act to Increase the Notice Period for Rent Increases. Ninety days notice of a rent increase is a modest, reasonable protection for renters and expectation of landlords.

Under current law, landlords can increase rents with only 45 days notice. Given Maine's historically low vacancy rates, this can leave tenants facing impossible tradeoffs between unaffordable rent increases and being unable to find new housing. By increasing the notice requirements, tenants have a greater opportunity to find a way to either pay the higher rent or find a new home.

When tenants have short notice of needing to find new housing, that decreases their market power and ability to search for housing that fits their budget. In Maine, over a third of renters already pay more than 30% of their income on housing, and two thirds of extremely low income households pay more than 60% of their income on housing. These unsustainable conditions put Maine renters at high risk of homelessness. It is critical we increase the time they have to navigate any rent increases.

On a personal note, as a small landlord, I can say that my partner and I budget out the repairs, utilities and other ongoing costs well in advance and support this or even greater notice requirements for rent increases.

Individuals, families and the entire community all benefit when people have stable housing that they can afford. Health and mental health outcomes improve; educational attainment rises; stress levels decrease; social ties improve and incidents of domestic violence decrease; economic and civic engagement increase while use of public supports decrease.<sup>1</sup>

Laws that increase housing stability help us directly address the underlying causes of our housing crisis. This bill is one piece of the housing puzzle in Maine. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 701 and make a modest increase in our tenant protections.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to take any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Housing-Affordability-and-Stability-Brief.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Housing-Affordability-and-Stability-Brief.pdf)