



Raise-Op Housing Cooperative
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Shannon Fuller. I am the Cooperative Resident Organizer at Raise-Op Housing Cooperative in Lewiston. I'm here today to voice our support for LD 847, an Act to Prohibit Housing Discrimination.

Housing discrimination based on source of income is discrimination. Allowing this discrimination to occur creates and increases hardships for families. The availability of housing choices is about more than the physical walls of a home. It affects where people can work, where children go to school, access to resources, and the well-being of community members. Restricting choice through discrimination creates segregated neighborhoods, where low-income folks are forced to live in sub-standard homes.

A landlord's refusal to rent to voucher holders disproportionately affects marginalized populations, regardless of whether there are other biases or intent. People of color, people with disabilities, and single mothers are more likely to face discrimination and a lack of housing choices due to this refusal. In discriminating against voucher holders, landlords intensify housing segregation and directly work against fair housing laws, rather than help to create integrated and healthy communities.

Rental assistance and housing vouchers are crucial to helping low-income Mainers have access to good homes. But discrimination based on source of income undermines the usefulness of these programs by restricting housing options. Maine has an obligation to end the stigma against folks receiving housing assistance and to increase access for all Mainers to safe, affordable housing that contributes to healthy communities where people can thrive.