

Jim Devine  
Homeless Voices for Justice

Dear Representative Sylvester, Senator Rafferty, and distinguished members of the Committee of Labor and Housing

My name is Jim Devine and I am an advocate for Homeless Voices for Justice. Homeless Voices for Justice is a grassroots organization, organized by people who are or have experienced homelessness. We seek to empower people experiencing homelessness and poverty whose perspectives are often excluded from the development of policies. We do this through protest, education, positive policy change, and reform. I am writing in support of LD 211 An Act to Support Emergency Shelter for Persons Experiencing Homelessness, which would provide an additional \$3,000,000 in funding to homeless shelters in Maine.

I support this bill because homelessness is a problem throughout our state. In Portland for example, you will see that there are people in need of emergency shelter and are currently sleeping outside in the cold. People experiencing homelessness are at risk of death and illness due to the elements of winter in Maine. Everyone deserves a place where they can rest, stay warm, and access case work services. In order to provide adequate and dignified emergency shelter, there needs to be additional funding. Funding for these emergency shelters is an essential ingredient in addressing homelessness and helping people obtain life saving shelter.

In addition, COVID-19 has presented more barriers and challenges in obtaining shelter. There are capacity limitations because of social distancing, and an increase in people experiencing housing insecurity. Now is the time to address these issues before they grow.

I myself have experienced homeless and I appreciate the help I have received in the past. I support LD 211 because everyone deserves shelter. I urge to to support LD 211 as well. Thank you.