

Mike Stuckmyer
Portland

Good morning Representative Sylvester, Senator Rafferty, and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Mike Stuckmyer. I am a member of Homeless Voices for Justice and I live in Portland.

I am here today to testify in support of LD 473: An Act To Create the Maine Rental Assistance and Voucher Guarantee Program.

I experienced homelessness in 2018 for four months. During that time, I stayed at the Oxford Street Shelter in Portland. After four months I was able to find housing, for which I am very thankful, but I have no assistance in paying for my rent.

I was lucky when I first got my current housing to have a relationship with my landlord where I helped him around the building and he provided a credit off of my rent. However, my building was just sold, I don't have that relationship with my new landlord. I am already behind on my rent.

My landlord threatens me with evictions, and this has created a great deal of stress in my life. I am working to get rental assistance through the federal pandemic rental assistance program, but that is only temporary.

If I had a voucher, I wouldn't have to live in fear of being evicted or being homeless again. I have been on the Section 8 waitlist for 3 years, and I know many people who have been on the list far longer. I can't wait another 3 years, or even another 3 months, I need rental assistance now in order to keep my housing.

My only income is Social Security Disability. I can work part-time, but due to a recent hospitalization I doubt that I will be able to work for quite a while. Social Security and a part-time job are even still not enough to pay take care of my rent.

Maine needs a rental assistance and voucher guarantee program so that people like me can keep our housing. No one should have to experience the horrors of homelessness or live in fear of eviction. I urge you to support LD473 so that Mainers like me can access the housing we need. Thank you.