



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Kristen Cloutier

33 Charles St.

Lewiston, ME 04240

Phone: (207) 807-1637

Kristen.Cloutier@legislature.maine.gov

Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of LD 1246, Resolve, To Study Best Practices and Different Area Needs for Development of Affordable Homes and Expanding Home Ownership in Maine Communities Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier and I represent House District 60, part of Lewiston. I am here in support of **LD 1246, Resolve, To Study Best Practices and Different Area Needs for Development of Affordable Homes and Expanding Home Ownership in Maine Communities.**

It is no secret that our state is facing an affordable housing crisis. This crisis existed well before the COVID-19 pandemic and has only been exacerbated in the past year. According to the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 35,000 renters pay more than half their income towards housing costs, and there isn't a single county in our state where a full-time worker earning the minimum wage can afford a typical two-bedroom apartment. We must do better in solving this crisis.

This session, I have been proud to participate in the Housing Working Group, which brings together policymakers and other stakeholders to seek and consider solutions to our housing emergency. This group exemplifies the value of collaboration and has demonstrated the importance of having advocates from across the state joining together to brainstorm solutions.

As you know, there is a slate of bills that has been introduced this session, many of which this committee will consider. They are largely designed to help Mainers find and maintain affordable housing and access support if they are unhoused. LD 1246 builds upon the work of the Housing Working Group, and these bills, by creating a statewide commission that convenes a wide swath of stakeholders to collaborate, document needs, share best practices and make recommendations so that we, as policymakers, can craft needed and effective legislation.

As lawmakers, it is our duty to help improve the lives of our fellow Mainers. Access to affordable housing is fundamentally important to the health, success and overall wellbeing of our neighbors and communities. This bill will aide in our ability to find and create solutions that are impactful. I hope you will join me in supporting this bill.

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