

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing: my name is Mary Dunn, I am a resident of Whitefield and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1656.

In the past few months housing has gotten quite a bit of attention in the media. Whether living in Portland, Lewiston, or other small cities and towns across Maine, there is a crisis because of the lack of affordable and energy efficient housing. As an elder in this state, this concerns me greatly. I have lived through the difficulty of finding affordable housing for my family. So to hear that this continues to be an issue is deeply disappointing. And even though I struggled, it is clear to me that the issue is much worse today. I can't imagine trying to find somewhere safe and warm for my family in today's rental and housing markets.

Recently three young friends have shared the struggles they are having because of their tenuous housing situations. All three explained how they need to move for various reasons but shared that even though they all work full time jobs they have nowhere to go because they cannot afford the rising cost of housing.

One friend and his partner, both essential workers, shared their urgency to find a new home. Because of high rents they cannot find another apartment that they can afford. They are preparing to live in a camping park in a camper. Another friend shared that her son, a disabled veteran, needs to move with his own son and dog. He cannot find anything that he can afford and is in the process of setting up a tent in his mother's small yard while his son sleeps in a spare room. A couple with two young children need to move from their apartment because it has mold and is causing one child to be sick. After multiple complaints to the landlord nothing has been done. For weeks they have searched for a new apartment and yet they can't find one that they can afford. They also work full time as essential workers. They are also preparing to live in a campground but in a tent. This lack of affordable housing is a crisis and a moral disgrace that needs to be addressed quickly.

As we walk or drive through towns and cities in our state it is clear that we need safe, affordable housing. No one should be living in an unsafe home and no one should be homeless in a state as great as ours. When I hear these stories I try to imagine the overwhelming fear and sadness these families are experiencing. Then I imagine we make the decision to create the changes needed to make these stories a thing of the past. We would also be remiss to miss this opportunity of making these housing units as energy efficient as possible as we work to address the climate crisis.

For these three families and the many others here in Maine struggling to keep a roof over their head, as well as those without a roof, please pass LD 1656.

Thank you for your work on this incredibly important bill.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary Dunn
Whitefield, Maine

Mary Dunn
Whitefield

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing: my name is Mary Dunn, I am a resident of Whitefield and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1656.

In the past few months housing has gotten quite a bit of attention in the media. Whether living in Portland, Lewiston, or other small cities and towns across Maine, there is a crisis because of the lack of affordable and energy efficient housing. As an elder in this state, this concerns me greatly. I have lived through the difficulty of finding affordable housing for my family. So to hear that this continues to be an issue is deeply disappointing. And even though I struggled, it is clear to me that the issue is much worse today. I can't imagine trying to find somewhere safe and warm for my family in today's rental and housing markets.

Recently three young friends have shared the struggles they are having because of their tenuous housing situations. All three explained how they need to move for various reasons but shared that even though they all work full time jobs they have nowhere to go because they cannot afford the rising cost of housing.

One friend and his partner, both essential workers, shared their urgency to find a new home. Because of high rents they cannot find another apartment that they can afford. They are preparing to live in a camping park in a camper. Another friend shared that her son, a disabled veteran, needs to move with his own son and dog. He cannot find anything that he can afford and is in the process of setting up a tent in his mother's small yard while his son sleeps in a spare room. A couple with two young children need to move from their apartment because it has mold and is causing one child to be sick. After multiple complaints to the landlord nothing has been done. For weeks they have searched for a new apartment and yet they can't find one that they can afford. They also work full time as essential workers. They are also preparing to live in a campground but in a tent. This lack of affordable housing is a crisis and a moral disgrace that needs to be addressed quickly.

As we walk or drive through towns and cities in our state it is clear that we need safe, affordable housing. No one should be living in an unsafe home and no one should be homeless in a state as great as ours. When I hear these stories I try to imagine the overwhelming fear and sadness these families are experiencing. Then I imagine we make the decision to create the changes needed to make these stories a thing of the past. We would also be remiss to miss this opportunity of making these housing units as energy efficient as possible as we work to address the climate crisis.

For these three families and the many others here in Maine struggling to keep a roof over their head, as well as those without a roof, please pass LD 1656.

Thank you for your work on this incredibly important bill.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mary Dunn
Whitefield, Maine