

Tiana Warriner
Auburn

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

I am a single mother of two children. I have been on a low-income housing wait list for over a year. I have been homeless 4 times in the last 10 years and I am currently in a rental unit that I struggle to afford, but was far more reasonable than any other options--which are limited. The landlord has decided to use the building for another purpose and I have until July to find a new place to live. I have been looking for over two months, and finding something under \$1,500 with even just two bedrooms for my children and I is nearly impossible. I don't have any more hours left in my day to fit in working more hours, and I miss my kids. We need to ask ourselves why a working single mom has to choose between seeing her kids or having a place to live. It isn't even only the financial aspect; there isn't even anything available. There are barely 5 open apartments in the area at any given time. One day I looked and there were none.

There is a critical lack of affordable housing. We have reached a breaking point and the only way out is to build more sustainable, affordable housing. The cost of rent is out of reach for most middle-to-low-income people, and the lack of options is not helping either.

We also need to look at how this crisis exacerbates the opioid/addiction crisis. There's something called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This is the idea that without certain basic needs met, we make it harder and harder to meet any other needs, and the most basic of all our needs are food, water, and shelter. We want to combat an opioid crisis in a place where shelter is something that can barely be provided to people who can afford it. How are we expecting people to find recovery when they can't even find a safe place to lay their head down at night? We are in a time people are dying at alarming rates, and it's no wonder; what's there to live for? We have taken away hope of being able to ever have any semblance of a healthy normal life. With nowhere to live, and no way to balance work, bills and family, we've come to an impasse.

I'm a person in recovery. I fight this battle daily with other addicts. Just a week ago I drove around for two hours with a newly sober woman who didn't have anywhere to go, and finally found a place that wasn't safe. She left, and ended up sleeping under a bridge. She's no longer in recovery, and why would she be? We should not be expecting people to want to get and be better when there isn't even any hope for being able to safely sleep.

I support the sustainable housing act. It's time something be done about lack of housing.