



Volunteers of America®

NORTHERN
NEW ENGLAND

February 21, 2022

Senator Ned Claxton
Representative Michele Meyer
Committee on Health and Human Services
Maine State Legislature
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1850

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Richard A. Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Maine and serve as the President & CEO for Volunteers of America Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. I am also a foster-adoptive parent for six children. I write in support of LD 1850 and its proposed investment in Intensive Care Coordination Using High Fidelity Wraparound Services.

Volunteers of America (VOA) Northern New England is a faith-based community nonprofit that is

The bill, introduced by House Speaker Ryan Fecteau, D-Biddeford, would:

- Prohibit local growth caps
- Require towns to allow low-density affordable housing

- Allow construction of four-unit dwellings in any residential zone
- Allow construction of accessory dwelling units
- Require towns to establish a higher-density multifamily housing zone
- Establish a state board to review local housing permit decisions

The bill, L.D. 2003, would create a \$1.3 million state grant program for towns to develop land-use rules that would increase housing opportunities. Towns willing to study how their land-use rules impact housing availability could get up to \$75,000 in grants over three years.

The housing need, cost and backlog are so extensive that they can only be reduced with a multi-tiered initiative that incorporates a myriad of tools available, over many years. Relying solely on traditional publicly-financed multi-unit rental developments will – at best – meet a small (?%) percentage of the escalating need.

There is a statewide economic and social crisis caused by a limited housing supply. While many cities and towns are proactively working to address the issue, some lack the technical assistance and the statewide clarity to adequately do so. This bill - like in the case of shoreland zoning- would clarify state policies with respect to housing as well as individuals' ability to use their land to meet their housing needs. At the same time, like with shoreland zoning, it allows local governments some discretion on how to implement those needed statewide policies on the local level. In addition, it will provide up to \$75,000 to municipalities to develop updated zoning to meet this critical statewide need."

a member of the Maine Child Welfare Action Network. Many social service organizations have been concerned by the State's decision to terminate the Alternative Response Program (ARP) which provided both investigation of low to moderate reports of child abuse and neglect and intensive case management services for parents to build skills and resources to ensure the safety and well-being of children. The State's decision to switch the investigation of low to moderate risk cases to 'in house' OCFS workers, away from community-based contractors, is within the agency purview. However, there appears to be a lack of further investment by OCFS in community-based case management services to families as part of this change in policy.

LD 1850 would offer dedicated funding for Intensive Care Coordination Using High Fidelity Wraparound services. Given the inherent power differential between families and child protective assessment case workers who are obligated to investigate a family, the ability of community-based service providers to offer strength-based and collaborative case coordination and wraparound services to the family is

necessary. Intensive Care Coordination Using High Fidelity Wraparound services will offer a family time to outline their strengths, needs, and culture; develop a child and family team; craft a plan of care; and leverage natural supports. This is a model program that has been successfully employed in at least 15 other states (http://www.chcs.org/media/Intensive-Care-Coordination-Using-Wraparound_Rates-and-Billing-Structure.pdf).

As a social service provider, I fear that many parents, who would have previously received case management support under the ARP, will not be eligible for other publicly-funded case management services. Most Medicaid reimbursement case management services are siloed, and families would be ineligible unless the child meets a disability criterion.

A whole-person approach is necessary if we are going to move upstream to prevent child maltreatment and allow children to safely remain with their families. Offering families access to Intensive Care Coordination Using High Fidelity Wraparound services will offer positive outcomes for our child welfare system in Maine. If funding is dedicated to this program, the Legislature should ask for annual reporting from OCFS regarding outcomes achieved through this community service in improved child safety and metrics of child well-being.

I would ask you to give this bill serious consideration. Thank you for your public service to Maine.

Sincerely,



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