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April 16, 2021

***Representative Laura Supica Introducing***  
**LD 1300, An Act To Require County Governments To Coordinate with Municipalities To**  
**Create Plans To Address Homelessness**  
***Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government***

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. I am Representative Laura Supica and I represent House District 126, which includes part of Bangor. I am here today to present **LD 1300, An Act To Require County Governments To Coordinate with Municipalities To Create Plans To Address Homelessness.**

Every summer my region sees a rise in folks experiencing homelessness. There are several reasons for this influx during normal times, but last year the pandemic greatly exacerbated this situation. In late winter, early spring of last year, we already had our usual high numbers of people experiencing homelessness occupying public spaces.

During this time a woman named Valarie, who was experiencing homelessness, was placed in a cab at the Brewer Hannaford and sent to the Bangor Waterfront. We have construction going on next to the waterfront, so a large camp of people were living there and taking shelter under the overpass. The conditions are not great. The cab pulled up some ways down the street and Valerie exited. Her body was found a day later. She had died from exposure; never making it down the path to the tents. My heart grieves for Valerie, from Lincoln. She is dearly missed by friends and family.

Over the summer, the population of folks experiencing homelessness ballooned. My city does not have the resources to care for everyone, so people end up sleeping outside in unsafe conditions. Failure to address this issue is grossly inhumane.

That is why I am here today to present to you a plan to give towns the support and guidance they need to begin to address homelessness and housing insecurity. LD 1300 requires the county commissioners of each county, in consultation and coordination with the Statewide Homeless Council, regional homeless councils and the municipalities in the county, to develop and implement a plan with protocols to address homelessness within the county.

Not all towns have the same services, but we can start to bridge that divide with our county governments. By having counties work directly with their municipalities to examine the needs specific to their region, they can then take stock and better utilize the resources that do exist, as well as identify the gaps specific to those regions. The housing needs that Cumberland County has are significantly different from the needs of Pis Cataquis County, which has seen a spike in multi-generational homelessness in the past year.

However, to simply direct the counties to do this work without guidance from the state would be ineffective and ultimately damaging. We have taken great steps to address these issues with our own regional homeless councils. We do not want to have 16 independent entities working in silos and possibly undoing roads that have been laid. By integrating with the regional councils, our counties become a bridge for our small rural towns who often do not have enough staff or resources to mount an adequate response. This bill provides an opportunity to triage lists for our towns and creates as a platform to shine a light on our communities' housing needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill today. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.