

**Chair Rotundo, Chair Gattine, esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Legislative Leaders:**

**We, the undersigned, seek your support to fully fund LD 1522, An Act to Establish the Maine Eviction Prevention Program (EPP).** Re-investment in EPP will prevent thousands of evictions, protecting the health and safety of Maine renter families, while helping Maine communities avoid millions in costs from our housing affordability crisis. We're joining together in this call now to underline the urgency of this need and the effectiveness of EPP.

The housing affordability crisis is well documented and has hit low-income Maine renters particularly hard - by 2023, 65% of Maine households making \$32k or less per year were paying *more than half* of their income on rent. **After the implementation of the EPP pilot in late 2024 there was a 5% drop in evictions and a 30% decrease in evictions the following year. EPP became a lifeline to Mainers facing impossible choices between housing, healthcare, and food.**

The Eviction Prevention Program is responsive to renters' urgent needs and well-targeted to Mainers who need help, and who have the chance to remain safely housed and rebuild economic stability. **Since 2024, the program has provided immediate rent relief to 1,300 households, with an average income of only \$17,000, spanning every county in Maine.** People who applied were mainly working, and reported going without medical care and food to make ends meet. More than half of program participants were parents or guardians with a child at home.

By protecting individuals and families from evictions, you will also help protect the state from lost sales tax revenue, and from impacts to MaineCare, shelters, the criminal justice system, and General Assistance.

Finally, funding EPP is an important part of Maine's response to federal cuts to SNAP (food assistance), MaineCare and ACA health care subsidies, and housing support, as well as chaotic, disruptive federal policies like ICE's recent surge. EPP keeps people safe in their homes and is an essential complement to efforts to build more homes for the future.

The amended version of LD 1522, sponsored by Rep. Ambureen Rana, received a bipartisan majority of "Ought to Pass as Amended" vote in the Housing and Economic Development Committee. The amended bill provides \$10 million each year for two years, enough to prevent thousands more evictions across all of Maine.

We implore you to recognize the value of the EPP and fund LD 1522. We can protect Maine renters, cities and towns across the state from the harm of evictions and the housing crisis, and provide families with safety and the opportunity to build economic security.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Addiction and Mental Health Services, Maine

Community Action Alliance

Consumer Council System of Maine

Consumers for Affordable Health Care

Food and Medicine

Frannie Peabody Center

Full Plates, Full Potential

Homeless Voices for Justice

Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

Maine Center for Economic Policy

Maine Children's Alliance

Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

Maine Community Action Partnership

Maine Council of Churches

Maine Council on Aging

Maine Education Association

Maine Equal Justice

Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

Maine Medical Association

Maine Osteopathic Association

Maine People's Alliance

Maine Statewide Youth Action Board

Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network

Maine Women's Lobby

Maine Youth for Climate Justice

Maine Youth Power

New Ventures

Our People Clinic at the United Community Living Center

Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations

Planned Parenthood

Portland Tenants Union

Preble Street

Presente Maine

ProjectHome

ProsperityME

Raise-Op

United Community Living Center

A United Methodist Pastor, Presque Isle