

Committee on Health and Human Services  
c/o Kerri Withee, Legislative Information Office  
Cross Building, Room 209  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD48: *An Act To Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Request a Waiver Relating to Support Services and To Provide Funds to Prevent Homelessness*

Dear Senator Claxton , Representative Meyer, and other members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Jerry Marx. I am a resident of Portland and Executive Director of the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. There are over 5,000 licensed social workers providing health services to individuals and families throughout the state. Too many of these people are living on the streets in Maine.

NASW Maine supports LD48. My understanding is that the bill, submitted by Representative Michael Brennan of Portland, would provide Medicaid-funded support services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Maine. Further, the bill has a preventative aspect in that it provides ongoing funds to the Housing First Assistance Program via Maine's community action programs. These funds would go to Maine residents at risk of becoming homeless.

On any given night in Maine, there are about 2,500 individuals surviving on the streets. This is according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2020). As you all know, some of these homeless are families with children; some are teenagers on their own without parental guidance. Some of these individuals are homeless during the winter in Maine when temperatures drop below freezing.

This bill proposes to use a highly respected program model and an existing network of community agencies to address homelessness. I urge you all to vote yes on LD48.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Marx, PhD  
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References:

The National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2020). Maine. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report/maine/>