



MUUSAN

**Maine Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network**

MUUSAN's new Housing & Homelessness Team urges you to take one of the actions described below as soon as possible in support of rental assistance for very low income Mainers. Currently, such assistance is proposed in **LD 1710 "An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program,"** also referred to as the **HOME Act**. Some of its provisions may be incorporated into other bills if LD 1710 as a whole cannot move forward.

The Act has already had a hearing and three work sessions in the Housing Committee, which must vote and "report it out" before it would be considered by the full Legislature. Even as scaled down by the sponsor in an amendment before the last work session, it faces strong opposition from landlords and their allies for the additional rights and protections it gives covered renters.

Here are a few things the Act as currently proposed by its sponsor would accomplish:

- Provide rent assistance (approved for a year at a time) to those making at or below 30% of the area median income (for a family of three, that could be as little as \$20,466/yr). Even so-called "Affordable Housing" would still be far out of reach to these households without rental assistance. Many are among the 15,000 on Maine's years-long waitlist for federally subsidized Section 8 housing vouchers;
- Include asylum-seekers, who are not eligible for federal Section 8 assistance;
- Reduce the strain on local General Assistance programs that currently struggle to fill the gap with 30-day emergency fund vouchers that were never intended for long-term use and require reapplication every month;
- Increase legal protections for renters facing voucher-use discrimination.

NOTE: you can read about [the revised bill](#) or learn more through [materials](#) prepared by our community partner Maine Equal Justice (MEJ)

Here's what we are asking you to do in support of rental assistance for those renters most in need:

- Write (email is fine) or call your legislator - **especially** if they are on [the Housing Committee](#)! Make clear that you want to see a strong rental assistance program as close as possible to that proposed in LD 1710. [To find your legislator](#).
- Write or call the [Governor's office](#).
- Send a Letter to the Editor of your local paper.

NOTE: You can find simple, easy to use "Talking Points" for your call or email in the [MEJ materials](#). If you want to express your concern as a matter of UU principles, consider using some of the points/language in [MUUSAN's testimony](#) on the original bill. More guidance on taking any of these steps can be found in [MUUSAN's Tips & Tools](#).

Finally, if you think you may be interested in joining the new Housing & Homelessness Action Team, come to the next meeting on Zoom:

Thursday, February 8 from 5-6 pm!

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom Link!

Also: [Register](#) for MUUSAN's next Network Meeting!

Advocating for New Gun Safety Laws for Maine

Saturday, February 10th, 2024

[Register Today and Join Us on Zoom](#)

10am - noon

Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
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