MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1540

H.P. 992

House of Representatives, April 6, 2023

An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Labor and Housing suggested and ordered printed.

ROBERT B. HUNT

R(+ B. Hunt

Clerk

Presented by Representative MILLETT of Cape Elizabeth.

Cosponsored by Senator VITELLI of Sagadahoc and

Representatives: GATTINE of Westbrook, GOLEK of Harpswell, KESSLER of South

Portland, LOOKNER of Portland, PERRY of Calais, RANA of Bangor, WORTH of Ellsworth,

Senator: PIERCE of Cumberland.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not 2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and 3 Whereas, the State is experiencing the worst housing affordability crisis in its history 4 and immediate action is necessary; and 5 Whereas, in 2021, the median income for renters was \$34,018 compared to \$71,717 for homeowners; and 6 7 Whereas, 41% of renter households are paying more than 30% of their income on rent, 16% of renters are paying more than 50% of their income on rent and at least 15,000 8 9 renter households are on a 3-year to 5-year waiting list for the so-called Section 8 rental 10 assistance program; and 11 Whereas, the months of January and February in 2023 saw more eviction filings for 12 renters than the previous 10 years; and 13 Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as 14 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, 15 therefore, 16 17 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows: 18 Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA c. 201, sub-c. 3-D is enacted to read: 19 **SUBCHAPTER 3-D** 20 STABLE HOME FUND PROGRAM 21 §4767. Stable Home Fund Program 22 1. Fund established. The Stable Home Fund, referred to in this subchapter as "the 23 fund," is established within the Maine State Housing Authority. The fund may receive money from any available state, federal or private source. The fund may not lapse, but 24 25 must be carried forward to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. 26 2. Program purpose. The Stable Home Fund Program, referred to in this subchapter as "the program," is an eviction prevention support program established within the Maine 27 State Housing Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide eligible persons with 28 29 \$300 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months or 30 until those persons secure housing by means of a housing voucher program administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United 31 States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8 or secure a 32 33 subsidized housing unit. 34 **3.** Administration. The Maine State Housing Authority shall administer the program under this section except that the Maine State Housing Authority may delegate the 35 administration of the program and provide appropriate funding from the fund to a municipal 36 37 housing authority with respect to providing assistance to eligible persons located within the 38 municipal housing authority's jurisdiction. The administrator of the program may not require an application process for property owners, rental payment standards or unit inspections.

- **4. Eligibility.** To be eligible for the program a person must:
- A. Earn less than 60% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8; and
- B. At the time of application to the program, not be using a federal housing voucher to pay rent or live in a subsidized housing unit.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

11 SUMMARY

This bill, which includes an emergency preamble and emergency clause, creates the Stable Home Fund and the Stable Home Fund Program within the Maine State Housing Authority. The purpose of the program is to provide persons earning up to 60% of the median income for an area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development with \$300 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months or until those persons secure housing by means of a housing voucher program administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, or secure a subsidized housing unit.

The bill directs the Maine State Housing Authority to administer the program except that the Maine State Housing Authority may delegate the administration of the program and provide appropriate funding from the fund to a municipal housing authority with respect to eligible persons located within the municipal housing authority's jurisdiction.