

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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L.D. 2158

Date: 3/22/24

(Filing No. H-850)

HOUSING

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
131ST LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 1382, L.D. 2158, "An Act to Improve the Housing Voucher System"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Improve the Housing Voucher System and Reduce the Number of Voucher Expirations'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Sec. 1. Maine State Housing Authority to establish stakeholder group.

Resolved: That the Maine State Housing Authority shall establish a stakeholder group to improve the system that governs the distribution and use of housing vouchers. For the purposes of this resolve, "housing voucher" means a tenant-based housing choice voucher issued under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, as amended.

Sec. 2. Membership. Resolved: That the membership of the stakeholder group established pursuant to section 1 is as follows:

1. Four members who represent local housing authorities who distribute housing vouchers, including at least 2 members who distribute housing vouchers to be used in rural areas of the State;
2. Four members who provide housing navigation services to tenants who use income-based rental assistance programs, including one member who provides services through a housing authority operated by a federally recognized Indian tribe and one member who provides assistance at homeless shelters;
3. One member who has experience providing legal advice or assistance related to the use of housing vouchers;
4. One member who has experience administering municipal general assistance;
5. The executive director of the Maine Human Rights Commission or the executive director's designee; and

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

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1 6. Staff from the Maine State Housing Authority with experience in housing voucher
2 distribution and the process for requesting a waiver from the United States Department of
3 Housing and Urban Development asking for an adjustment to the fair market rent rate
4 amount used when determining housing voucher amounts.

5 **Sec. 3. Duties. Resolved:** That the stakeholder group under section 1 shall:

6 1. Outline the process for requesting a waiver from the United States Department of
7 Housing and Urban Development seeking an increase of the fair market rent for any
8 particular area of the State and, if a waiver is granted, how it allows local housing
9 authorities to enter into contracts with landlords at the highest rent allowed pursuant to that
10 waiver;

11 2. Determine how many local housing authorities have requested fair market rent
12 waivers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, how and
13 when each such request was made and the outcome of the requests;

14 3. Determine how many local housing authorities have not requested fair market rent
15 waivers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the
16 reason for each such decision, including the identification of barriers cited by the local
17 housing authorities;

18 4. Develop a list of all of the programs administered by local housing authorities that
19 create additional housing units, including housing units for which housing vouchers will
20 be used to pay for rent;

21 5. Consider strategies to support local housing authorities with the submission of
22 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development waiver requests, including
23 using the assistance of the Maine State Housing Authority to assist in administration of that
24 waiver request process;

25 6. Develop a chart that outlines the rules governing the use of housing vouchers
26 distributed by the Maine State Housing Authority as well as local housing authorities,
27 including but not limited to the time frames associated with securing housing using a
28 housing voucher and housing voucher expiration;

29 7. Identify any flexibility that exists regarding the distribution and use of housing
30 vouchers, including but not limited to the time frame within which a housing voucher must
31 be used prior to its expiration and the ability to use a housing voucher in an area of the
32 State outside of the area for which it was issued;

33 8. Consider strategies to improve outreach and education to landlords with the goal of
34 increasing the number of landlords who accept tenants who use housing vouchers or other
35 income-based rental assistance; and

36 9. Make recommendations, excluding the development of more housing stock, to
37 maximize the acceptance of housing vouchers by landlords and increase flexibility in the
38 use of housing vouchers, including but not limited to housing voucher expiration,
39 submitting United States Department of Housing and Urban Development waiver requests
40 and amendments to rules of the Maine State Housing Authority.

41 **Sec. 4. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than January 15, 2025, the Maine State
42 Housing Authority shall submit a report on the findings and recommendations of the
43 stakeholder group under section 1 to the joint select or joint standing committee of the

1 Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters. The committee receiving the report
2 is authorized to submit legislation based on the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.'

3 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section
4 number to read consecutively.

5 **SUMMARY**

6 This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve directing the Maine State Housing
7 Authority to convene a stakeholder group to gather information about the use of housing
8 vouchers and income-based rental assistance and consider ways to maximize the use of
9 housing vouchers by outlining the process for local housing authorities to request fair
10 market rent waivers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban
11 Development, making changes to the rules governing the expiration of housing vouchers
12 and the area of the State in which a housing voucher can be used and educating landlords
13 to increase the number of landlords who accept tenants who use housing vouchers or other
14 income-based rental assistance. The authority is directed to submit a report to the joint
15 select or joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing
16 matters by January 15, 2025.

17 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

18 (See attached)



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 2158

LR 2938(02)

An Act to Improve the Housing Voucher System

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H-850)

Committee: Housing

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Minor cost increase - General Fund

Minor cost increase - Maine State Housing Authority

Fiscal Detail and Notes

Additional costs to the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and the Maine Human Rights Commission to participate in a stakeholder group are expected to be minor and can be absorbed within each agency's existing budgeted resources.