

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SAR
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L.D. 847

Date: 3/19/26

MAJORITY

(Filing No. H888)

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STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
132ND LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to H.P. 533, L.D. 847, "An Act to Prohibit Housing Discrimination"

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

'Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Improve Tenant-Landlord Relationships and Increase the Use of Housing Vouchers'

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

'Sec. 1. Commission established. Resolved: That the Commission to Improve Tenant-Landlord Relationships and Increase the Use of Housing Vouchers, referred to in this resolve as "the commission," is established. For the purposes of this resolve, "housing voucher" means a tenant-based housing choice voucher issued under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended.

Sec. 2. Commission membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 13 voting members as follows:

1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, including one member of the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature;

2. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House, including one member of the party holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and one member of the party holding the 2nd largest number of seats in the Legislature;

3. One member representing an organization that advocates for justice issues, including issues related to housing discrimination in the State, appointed by the President of the Senate;

4. One member representing an organization that represents the interests of landlords in the State, appointed by the President of the Senate;

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- 1 5. One member with experience assisting individuals with accessing rental assistance
2 programs, including individuals receiving shelter or transitional housing services,
3 appointed by the President of the Senate;
 - 4 6. One member with expertise in legal issues affecting tenants with low incomes,
5 appointed by the Speaker of the House;
 - 6 7. One member who is a landlord who enters into leases with tenants who rely on
7 rental assistance, such as housing vouchers and municipal general assistance, appointed by
8 the Speaker of the House;
 - 9 8. One member who relies on general assistance and resides in income-restricted rental
10 housing in the State, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
 - 11 9. One member representing an organization that provides housing navigation services
12 to tenants who rely on rental assistance, such as housing vouchers or municipal general
13 assistance, to secure housing in the State, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
 - 14 10. One member representing a statewide organization of real estate brokers, appointed
15 by the Speaker of the House; and
 - 16 11. The Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee.
- 17 The executive director of the Maine Human Rights Commission and the director of the
18 Maine State Housing Authority, or their designees, serve as nonvoting members of the
19 commission.
- 20 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair
21 and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the
22 commission.
- 23 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved:** That all
24 appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this
25 resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative
26 Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members,
27 the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more
28 after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been
29 made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for
30 the commission to meet and conduct its business.
- 31 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the commission shall:
- 32 1. Consider the extent to which recipients of income-based rental assistance are subject
33 to housing discrimination based on the fact that they are recipients of rental assistance and
34 the adequacy of current law to deter or prevent discrimination against tenants who are
35 recipients of income-based rental assistance;
 - 36 2. Consider establishing a process for investigating and correcting housing
37 discrimination based on source of income against recipients of rental assistance in a timely
38 manner, including developing a specific plan to establish an office within the executive
39 branch to support successful tenancy for tenants who are recipients of income-based rental
40 assistance;
 - 41 3. Review the resources that currently exist to assist landlords in making necessary
42 repairs and improvements to their properties to enter into contracts for housing vouchers;

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1 4. Review efforts undertaken in other states to reduce housing and income
2 discrimination based on source of income and to increase the use of rental assistance,
3 including but not limited to housing vouchers;

4 5. Review studies addressing the impact of housing discrimination laws on the housing
5 market in areas in the State where housing discrimination laws have been implemented;

6 6. Establish a definition of "small landlord," including what the threshold number of
7 units owned is; and

8 7. Consider appropriate statutory remedies to housing discrimination on the basis of
9 source of income, including whether the remedies should be allocated to the Maine Human
10 Rights Act or the Maine Unfair Trade Practices Act.

11 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Legislative Council shall provide
12 necessary staffing services to the commission, except that Legislative Council staff support
13 is not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

14 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than November 4, 2026, the commission
15 shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested
16 legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
17 housing matters or the joint select committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
18 housing matters and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
19 over judiciary matters for presentation to the 133rd Legislature in 2027.'

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

22 **SUMMARY**

23 This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve that establishes the Commission to
24 Improve Tenant-Landlord Relationships and Increase the Use of Housing Vouchers. The
25 commission is tasked with examining issues relating to housing discrimination based on
26 the use of income-based rental assistance and incentivizing landlords to rent to tenants who
27 rely on income-based rental assistance programs such as so-called "Section 8" housing
28 vouchers and municipal general assistance. The commission is directed to submit a report
29 to the joint standing or joint select committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
30 housing matters and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
31 over judiciary matters. The committees are authorized to submit legislation to the 133rd
32 Legislature in 2027 based on the recommendations in the report.

33 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

34 (See attached)



Approved: 02/25/26 **LRL**

132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 847

LR 754(03)

An Act to Prohibit Housing Discrimination

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (H868)

Committee: Judiciary

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Legislative Cost/Study

Legislative Cost/Study

The general operating expenses of this study are projected to be \$3,050 in fiscal year 2025-26. The Legislature's budget for the 2026-2027 biennium includes \$7,253 in fiscal year 2025-26 and \$17,696 in fiscal year 2026-27 for costs of legislative studies, as well as \$41,338 of balances carried over from prior fiscal years for this purpose. Whether these amounts are sufficient to fund all studies will depend on the number of studies authorized by the Legislative Council and the Legislature. The additional costs of providing staffing assistance to the study during the interim can be absorbed utilizing existing budgeted staff resources.

Fiscal Detail and Notes

Any additional costs to the Office of the Attorney General, the Human Rights Commission and the Maine State Housing Authority to participate in the work of the commission are expected to be minor and can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.