

Health & Human Services Committee

Senator Eric L. Brakey, Chair

Representative Patricia Hymanson, Chair

April 24, 2017

LD 33

City of Portland: Testimony in Opposition

Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson, distinguished members of the Health & Human Services Committee, I am David MacLean, Director, Social Services Division of the Health & Human Services Department for the City of Portland submitting testimony in opposition of LD 33.

The City of Portland does not support the reducing of the lifetime TANF eligibility from 60 months (5 years) down to 36 months (3 years).

We feel that this would be a cost shift from Federal TANF block grant dollars to the general Assistance program which is 70% State dollars and 30% Municipal dollars. When faced with the loss of TANF after three years, should a family with deprived children find themselves facing the need for help with basic necessities they would fall to the responsibility of the last resort Safety Net State/ Municipal administered GA program. This certainly is not an argument in support of tying GA eligibility to TANF eligibility. In fact it is just the opposite. It demonstrates that GA needs to continue to be that last resort safety net program when TANF or all other assistance may not be available to provide basic survival necessities.

Although we are hopeful that as many clients as possible become self-sufficient when provided the right resources and under the right circumstances, we feel limiting the assistance to 3 years in the 18 year period that single or disabled parents are responsible for raising children is not reasonable.

We cannot predict what the future will bring in terms of the State and National economy and although we may be in good times now in terms of employment opportunities we cannot certainly predict how long this will last.

All that being said the City of Portland would not be in support of LD 33.

Thank you for your consideration.

David MacLean
Social Services Director
City of Portland, Maine