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Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

2 July 2018

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1109, "An Act To Establish Homelessness as an Emergency in the General Assistance Laws."

The current definition of "emergency," as it pertains to General Assistance, is:


"Any life-threatening situation or a situation beyond the control of the individual which, if not alleviated immediately, could reasonably be expected to pose a threat to the health or safety of a person; or at the municipality's option, a situation which is imminent and which may result in undue hardship or unnecessary cost to the municipality if not resolved immediately."

By automatically including broadly defined homelessness as an emergency, this legislation removes municipal discretion in determining an emergency on a case-by-case basis. It would instead require municipalities to provide benefits exceeding maximum allotments for an indefinite period of time. Significantly expanding the scope of what constitutes an "emergency" to include any time a person is living in a temporary housing situation is contrary to common sense and represents a significant shift in General Assistance policy.

Furthermore, as the current definition stands, a municipality has flexibility to deem individual instances of homelessness as emergencies on a case-by-case basis where the circumstances threaten life, health, or safety. There is no need for a statutory change.

For this reason, I return LD 1109 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



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