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LABOR AND HOUSING

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
130TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 347, L.D. 473, “An Act To Create the Maine Rental Assistance and Voucher Guarantee Program”

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

'An Act To Create the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program'

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

'Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA c. 201, sub-c. 14 is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER 14

MAINE RENTAL ASSISTANCE AND GUARANTEE PROGRAM

§4994-A. Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program

The Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the Maine State Housing Authority. The program includes a component that provides rental assistance to assist tenants with the cost of rent and a housing navigation and guarantee component as described in this section.

1. Rental assistance. The rental assistance component of the program must be administered in accordance with this subsection.

A. The Maine State Housing Authority shall establish and administer eligibility criteria and requirements for tenants or prospective tenants to participate in the program.

B. The Maine State Housing Authority may use any funds made available for the program. No more than 10% of the funds may be used to administer the program.

2. Housing navigation and guarantee. The housing navigation and guarantee component of the program must be administered in accordance with this subsection.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 A. The purpose of the housing navigation and guarantee component of the program is
2 to assist tenants with locating housing, obtaining rental assistance and applying for
3 rental housing; to provide supportive services to promote successful landlord-tenant
4 relationships; and to encourage landlords to work with rental assistance programs
5 available in the State, including but not limited to rental assistance programs
6 administered by or available through the Maine State Housing Authority, the
7 Department of Health and Human Services, local housing authorities, other state and
8 local agencies, federal agencies, municipalities and tribal governments.

9 B. The Maine State Housing Authority shall annually provide at least \$1,500,000 of
10 available funds provided pursuant to section 4994-B for the housing navigation and
11 guarantee component of the program. The funds may be used:

12 (1) To hire housing navigators affiliated with local housing authorities, general
13 assistance programs or nonprofit organizations to assist tenants with locating
14 housing and with the rental application process and to provide supportive services
15 to promote successful landlord-tenant relationships;

16 (2) To set aside funds to guarantee certain payments to landlords who enter into a
17 12-month rental agreement with a person receiving rental assistance. The guarantee
18 may pay for verified losses including unpaid rent and property damages, not to
19 exceed \$5,000, in the event the tenancy is unsuccessful;

20 (3) To assist tenants who participate in the program with the payment of security
21 deposits;

22 (4) To provide grants up to \$5,000 for necessary repairs to pass rental assistance
23 program inspection requirements; and

24 (5) To refer landlords to resources for the abatement of lead paint hazards in
25 residential housing if needed.

26 C. A landlord may participate in the housing navigation and guarantee component of
27 the program only if the landlord agrees to:

28 (1) Enter into a 12-month lease agreement with a tenant who pays rent in whole
29 or in part through a rental assistance program;

30 (2) Not consider the tenant's criminal record, credit score or rental history, to waive
31 application fees and to not require the last month's rent in advance; and

32 (3) Waive tenant late fees for any month in which rental assistance is paid by the
33 program.

34 3. Rules. The Maine State Housing Authority may adopt rules to implement this
35 section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in
36 Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

37 4. Reporting. The Maine State Housing Authority shall, on a biennial basis in January
38 beginning in 2023, report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having
39 jurisdiction over housing matters detailing by county the number of households that
40 received assistance from housing navigators, the number of security deposits paid and the
41 number of landlords who have accessed funds under the program.

1 The report must also include a request for funds, if necessary, to provide rental assistance
2 to a minimum of 1,000 households that are ineligible for or are on the waiting list for other
3 rental assistance programs; the number of households on the State's centralized waiting list
4 with regard to housing under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Section 8 at the time
5 the report is submitted; and the level of funding necessary to sustain the prospective rental
6 assistance provided through the emergency rental assistance program administered by the
7 Maine State Housing Authority for the preceding year.

8 The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters
9 may submit a bill based upon the report to the Legislature in the session in which the report
10 is received.

11 **§4994-B. Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund**

12 The Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund, referred to in this section
13 as "the fund," is established within the Maine State Housing Authority. The Maine State
14 Housing Authority may apply money in the fund for purposes authorized by this
15 subchapter. The fund may not lapse, but must be carried forward to carry out the purposes
16 of this subchapter.

17 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
18 allocations are made.

19 **HOUSING AUTHORITY, MAINE STATE**

20 **Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund N356**

21 Initiative: Provides ongoing funds to establish and implement the Maine Rental Assistance
22 and Guarantee Program under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, chapter 201,
23 subchapter 14.

24 GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
25 All Other	\$9,000,000	\$9,000,000
26		
27 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$9,000,000</u>	<u>\$9,000,000</u>

28
29 Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section
30 number to read consecutively.

31 **SUMMARY**

32 This amendment is the majority report of the committee and replaces the bill. The
33 amendment establishes the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program within the
34 Maine State Housing Authority. The program provides rental assistance to qualified tenants
35 and provides housing navigation services and includes a guarantee program to encourage
36 landlords to work with rental assistance programs. The amendment also creates the Maine
37 Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund to carry out the program. The amendment
38 includes an ongoing nonlapsing General Fund appropriation of \$9,000,000 per year.

39 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

40 **(See attached)**