



Stand Up For Maine Families - Oppose LD 368

LD 368 would deny General Assistance to families who can no longer get Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) due to the 60 month time limit.

You can help stop LD 368 from hurting Maine families

- **Tell your story – do you know someone who timed off TANF who needs GA now or might need it in the future?**

Talk to Kate at Maine Equal Justice about your story. Call 754-1489 or send an email to kbrennan@mejp.org.

- **Tell your legislator to oppose LD 368, *An Act to Integrate the State's General Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.***

Why LD 368 is bad policy for Maine

- **This idea has been rejected again and again for good reason.** In 2013 a majority of the GA Work Group created by the Legislature, comprised of stakeholders including municipalities, MMA, DHHS, advocates, and Maine Housing **voted to reject this proposal**. The GA Work Group came up with alternative recommendations to achieve state savings, lessen the burden on municipalities, and better support families facing extreme hardships. These changes were adopted by the legislature. Let's stop wasting our time with these harmful proposals and instead turn our attention to creating opportunity that will truly help families leave poverty behind.
- **GA is truly the safety net of last resort for these families.** Families that are currently timing off of TANF after 60 months are often households headed by single mothers raising young children on their own. Many of these families face serious obstacles to work. While the vast majority (nearly 90%) is coping with disability, many also would benefit from training and continued education in order to obtain sustainable employment. But **LD 368 does nothing to better prepare these families for employment**. DHHS data shows that of those who lost their TANF due to time limits and did not receive an extension, only 30% are employed. We should be creating opportunity

and bridges to employment for these families rather than taking away the only help that separates them from hunger and homelessness.

- **The policy proposed in LD 368 is equivalent to taking away someone's life jacket who is drowning after their boat just capsized.** We should be helping these families stay afloat, rather than taking away their lifeline during a period of crisis. **Ineligibility for GA would leave families with children in dire circumstances.** These are families with children, many of which would become homeless without the support that GA provides. Research by Professor Sandra Butler at the University of Maine at Orono concluded that "families losing assistance face multiple barriers to work and experience severe hardships as a result of losing TANF ... Many families reaching the 60 month limit cannot, through no fault of their own, gainfully support themselves. Yet they are often unable to get a hardship extension in the TANF program. We should not turn our backs on these families."

- **This policy runs counter to the fundamental purpose of the General Assistance Program,** which is intended to provide a safety net for families in need. This would impose an arbitrary limit regardless of circumstance.

- **LD 368 creates unnecessary burdens in our communities.** This proposal will not eliminate these families' needs or somehow better their circumstances. In fact, their circumstances will worsen. Limitations of this type do nothing to eliminate that need, and often shift the burdens onto other social service providers and programs. If the limit proposed in LD 368 is enacted without addressing unmet need, municipalities will be left to provide supplemental assistance without the benefit of state reimbursement.

**LD 368 makes hard times even harder.
Instead, let's create opportunity so Maine families can
achieve their full potential.**

Visit www.mejp.org to learn more about proposed state policy initiatives that build bridges to a better life for Maine families.