



January 28, 2025

Chairman Alexander  
House Committee on Housing  
Subject: Testimony in Opposition of New Hampshire House Bill 628

Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB 628. For the record, my name is Krysten Evans and I am the Director of Policy for ABLE NH. ABLE is a disability justice organization and we are a non partisan, non profit organization that fights for the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities.

Housing Choice Vouchers are a critical tool for ensuring low-income families, individuals with disabilities, and elderly residents can access stable and affordable housing. Despite the program's intent, individuals who rely on these vouchers face significant barriers, often being rejected outright by landlords based solely on their source of income.

The demand for affordable housing in New Hampshire is substantial. According to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority, approximately 35,442 residents live in subsidized housing, including those who use Housing Choice Vouchers. However, the need far exceeds availability. In 2021, the state issued 1,581 vouchers, but nearly 300 expired before being used, largely due to the difficulty of finding landlords willing to accept them. Additionally, local housing authorities report extensive waitlists for housing assistance. For example, the Keene Housing Authority currently has 853 applicants on its waitlist. These figures underscore the immense challenges voucher holders face in accessing stable housing in the state.

Discrimination against voucher holders is widespread, perpetuating housing instability and inequality. According to a 2022 study by the Urban Institute, landlords routinely reject tenants with vouchers, citing stigma and misconceptions about program requirements. Such practices unfairly target vulnerable populations and amplify New Hampshire's affordable housing crisis.

For people with disabilities, this issue is notably severe. Over 40 percent of voucher holders nationwide are people with disabilities. Many rely on vouchers not just for affordability but also for accessible housing options, which are already limited. When landlords refuse to accept vouchers, individuals with disabilities are left with no viable alternatives, increasing their risk of homelessness.

Housing is a human right, and denying individuals access to housing based on their source of income perpetuates cycles of poverty and inequality. Allowing this practice to continue harms the most vulnerable members of our communities. Reducing housing instability through fair housing policies like this one also has economic benefits, including better health outcomes, increased workforce participation, and reduced reliance on costly emergency services.

House Bill 628 is an important step toward ensuring fairness in New Hampshire's housing market. By prohibiting landlords from discriminating against voucher holders, this bill will expand access to housing, support individuals with disabilities, and address the state's housing crisis.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,



Krysten Evans

Krysten@ABLENH.org

Sources:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "National and State Housing Data Fact Sheets." CBPP, 2023, [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org).

Cunningham, Mary et al. "A Pilot Study of Landlord Acceptance of Housing Choice Vouchers." Urban Institute, 2022, [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org).

NH Housing Finance Authority. "2023 Residential Rental Cost Survey." NHHFA, 2023, [www.nhhfa.org](http://www.nhhfa.org).

National Low Income Housing Coalition. "The Case for Housing Policy Reform." NLIHC, 2022, [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org).

Phillips, David. "The Impact of Source-of-Income Protections in Massachusetts." Housing Policy Debate, vol. 30, no. 2, 2020, pp. 276-295.

New Hampshire Bulletin. "Section 8 Recipients Face Barriers to Housing." NH Bulletin, 2022, [www.newhampshirebulletin.com](http://www.newhampshirebulletin.com).

USAFacts. "How Many People Live in Subsidized Housing in New Hampshire?" USAFacts, 2023, [www.usafacts.org](http://www.usafacts.org).

