

Budget Days at the State House
Testimony of Heritier NOSSO

Good morning Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,
My name is Heritier NOSSO, Asylum seeker from Democratic Republic of Congo residing in Lewiston Maine.

First of all, I want to thank all of the rulers who have worked so hard over the past year to help Maine residents, specifically immigrants to get housing and food assistance.
We owe a great debt of gratitude and congratulations for the extraordinary and noticeable work that all of you are doing to make the state of Maine more and more agreeable, every Maine resident is proud to have you as representatives.

I am testifying in opposition to the elimination of the state-funded GA program and food assistance for immigrants.

I applied for asylum here in United States because the Congolese government wanted to arrest and torture me because I brought the youth together to protest against the President who does not want to organize the elections.

When the political circumstances forced me to stay here, I had many concerns regarding my job as lawyer and family that I left: I was worrying about my life in America specifically regarding food and housing.

I was about to commit a suicide Fortunately, I discovered Maine and got assistance in housing and food.

If you leave the budget passed, many communities would suffer, become homeless and lose the opportunity to build a better life here in Maine.

Additionally, providing assistance in Maine is one of the ways to attract Immigrants in Maine in order to help the state to grow up more and more.

Immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers enrich Maine community economically, socially, culturally, and politically.

According to the recent stats published by sun Journal, Here in Maine, small immigrant population makes up approximately 3.5 percent of work force.

From 2006-2010, there were 2,711 new immigrant business owners in Maine, generating a total of \$120 million in net income and accounting for 3.3 percent of total net business income in the state
Another example, when immigrants whose asylum seekers receive assistance, they volunteer at several institutions, including Lewiston Public Works, City Hall, Adult Education, public library, offices and Soup Kitchen.

As soon as we get the Work Permit, we start working and pay our taxes here.

Today, asylum seekers are in all mainstream institutions and constitute a remarkable workforce.
Take me for example. Thanks to the assistance I received from Maine, today I could not commit suicide.

I began working as a volunteer at Lewiston Public work , today I work as a Certified nursing assistant to help the elders and I also work at Immigrant Resource Center of Maine as Community Education and Prevention coordinator where we educate immigrants by teaching how to serve America and to avoid gender basic violence.

I am perfecting my English in order to resume law school in 2018 and become a attorney at law here in Maine as I was in Congo.

please, please, do not leave the budget pass as proposed, we want to live here in Maine and help our beautiful state to progress further.

So I thank you in advance for your help and May the Lord bless Maine that we love.

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