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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Speaker Ryan Fecteau, Chair, Legislative Council
Members, Legislative Council

FROM: Senator Ned Claxton, Senate Chair
Representative Michele Meyer, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

DATE: April 6, 2022

RE: **Racial Impact Statement Report**

The Committee on Health and Human Services submits this letter to provide feedback to the Legislative Council regarding the racial impact pilot process, as required by Public Law 2021, chapter 21 and as further described in the January 5, 2022 letter to the HHS Committee from the Legislative Council.

The Committee received racial impact statements on three bills:

- LD 372 *An Act To Provide Maine Children Access to Affordable Health Care* (Carney)
- LD 1574 *An Act To Ensure Support for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities or Autism with High Behavioral Need* (Meyer)
- LD 1693 *An Act To Advance Health Equity, Improve the Well-being of All Maine People and Create a Health Trust* (Talbot Ross)

Below, please find the Committee's responses to questions posed by the Legislative Council in the January 5 letter. The answers apply to all three of the above bills.

- Whether the timeframe in which the racial impact statement was provided to the committee was useful, or whether receipt of the racial impact statement at a different point in time might have proven more useful*

Committee members felt that the Committee received the racial impact statements too late in the bill consideration process to be helpful. The statements were received after public hearings were complete and after proposed amendments had already been drafted. For two of the bills, public hearings had in fact been held in the prior session. This resulted in the Committee considering a racial impact statement on an original bill draft

that differed substantially from the draft amended, which struck committee members as a disjointed process.

Committee members noted that having the racial impact statements at or immediately after the public hearing would have been more useful.

- b. *How much, if any, additional time did the committee devote to discussion and consideration of the bill as a result of the racial impact statement*

The committee heard a brief presentation on each racial impact statement and spent a short amount of time discussing each. However, the late timing of the impact statements and poor match between the original bill and the bill as amended, in some cases, meant that the racial impact statements were not particularly relevant to the committee's discussion. As a result, the committee did not spend a significant amount of time discussing the statements.

- c. *Whether the information provided in the racial impact statement served to advance discussion of the bill in committee*

The committee founds that the racial impact statements did not serve to advance discussion of the bills in committee, largely due to the timing of the submission of the statements and lack of relevancy to the bills as amended. The committee also noted that much of the information presented was general, national level information and not specific to Maine.

- d. *Whether information provided in the racial impact statement influenced the development by the committee of amendments to the bill*

Amendments had been drafted for the bills between the public hearings and work sessions. Because the committee did not receive the racial impact statements until immediately prior to the work sessions, the racial impact statements were not ultimately helpful in drafting amendments.

- e. *Whether the information provided in the racial impact statement had an impact on the committee's vote on the bill*

Committee members felt that the racial impact statements did not influence the committee's votes on the bills. This was because of the timing of receipt of the racial impact statement and also because the racial impact statements lacked specificity and definition.

- f. *Any additional observations or suggestions concerning the racial impact statement process pilot*

Committee members felt strongly that the racial impact statements were received far too late in the process of bill consideration to be helpful.

Committee members also noted that the individuals presenting the racial impact statements seemed frustrated by the limitations of the process, as they noted that they lacked sufficient time to do their work, as well as access to information relevant to craft

the racial impact statements. The committee suggested that the Legislative Council seek further feedback and recommendations from the researchers who drafted the racial impact statements.

The Health and Human Services Committee appreciates this opportunity to provide feedback on the racial impact statement pilot and welcomes further questions.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ned Claxton in cursive, with a circled "ES" to the right.

Sen. Ned Claxton
Senate Chair

Handwritten signature of Michele Meyer in cursive, with a circled "ES" to the right.

Rep. Michele Meyer
House Chair

cc. Members, Health and Human Services Committee