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Land access is one of the most critical components of agricultural production. Centuries of structural and institutional racism have blocked Black farmers from equal access to land in a myriad of ways. Land ownership in America, including in Maine, is inherently connected to a history of genocide and dispossession of Native peoples and forced labor from Black, Indigenous, and other people of color. Barriers to land access for farmers of color continue on to this day through discriminatory policies, unequal access to capital, and exclusion from information and services.

The painful legacy of past violence and denials continue to shape present-day experiences and opportunities for Black people across the country, including Maine's Black farmers. A bill like this is both the right thing to do morally and also the absolute best thing for the state.