

Testimony for the 131st Session of the Maine Legislature

Committee on Taxation

Public Hearing: May 4, 2023

LD. 1544: *An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit.*

Chairpersons Senator Grohoski and Representative Perry and Members of the Committee, my name is Suzanne Rudalevige and I live in Cape Elizabeth. I am a member of the anti-racism policy group at the HopeGateWay Church in Portland.

I am in support of this bill because its greatest positive impact will be on those in our State who have the least. Due to our long time structural inequities, the bulk of our Black and Brown residents are invariably at the bottom of Maine's economic ladder. This we must change. My reading of the Bible leaves me in no doubt that this is the way that God would have us go.

This child tax credit is modest but powerful in the difference it can make to those living on the margins. Because it does not have a minimum income threshold, it will be much more meaningful than Maine's previous Dependent Exemption Tax Credit. We know from the data that this was helpful in raising many families into something like livable economic levels, as did the now defunct Federal child tax credit.

In a year that promises that Maine will have more than expected State income, let us use it to raise our residents' living standards. *(This kind of tax credit is so much more efficient at raising the standard of living of the poor than tax cuts, since those invariably help the wealthy way more, making the wealth gap even wider.)*

The cost of the tax credits will, by and large, go back into Maine's economy, thus encouraging wider stability than simply among the families who receive them. It's time to stop blaming the poor for their economic status and face up to why so many boats are grounded by past discrimination and arbitrary judgement. This is our opportunity to float all boats in Maine!!

Thank you.