

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)
Opposing L.D. 1918: An Act to Modernize Maine's Business Incentive Programs by
Creating the Dirigo Business Incentives Program and Eliminating Certain Other Tax
Incentive Programs**

Sponsor: Senator Troy Jackson ("Governor's Bill")

Public Hearing: Friday, May 19, 2023

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I am the Advocacy Manager with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a statewide network of almost 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities. MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard. MIRC is also part of the Mainers for Tax Fairness coalition, and we join them today in testifying against L.D. 1918., the Dirigo Business Incentive.

According to the Maine Center for Economic Policy, "small Maine businesses will likely receive little, if any, benefits compared with large corporations." Small businesses are the heart of Maine's economy and often showcase the entrepreneurial spirit of many of Maine's immigrant-owned businesses. We are concerned that people like childcare providers in Lewiston, shop owners in Bangor, and restaurateurs in Rockland would be left behind compared to large corporations who are often based out of state.

Additionally, we feel funding would be a better spent if it went toward the issues keeping workers from reaching their full potential, such as the lack of affordable childcare, inefficient public transportation, and a shortage of affordable housing in the communities where they work. Our primary concern, quoting MECEP's analyst Maura Pillsbury again, is due to the fact "numerous assessments by state auditors over the years have failed to find a clear benefit of such tax incentives, noting that they divert money away from other important priorities."

Moreover, tax credits for large corporations with limited accountability measures are not the best way to help everyday Maine workers when there are so many existing unmet needs right now. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

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