

LD 2167 - An Act to Develop Maine's Economy and Strengthen Its Workforce by Establishing an Office of New Americans

Public Hearing: Tuesday, January 30th, 1 pm

Committee: State and Local Government | Cross Building, Room 214

My name is Mufalo Chitam, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC). I am here to express my support for LD 2167, on behalf of the board, 100 members, and partners of MIRC.

Our mission is to improve the legal, social, and economic conditions experienced by immigrants in Maine. We aim to enhance their lives while strengthening the state by advocating for their rights, sharing information, and fostering collaboration among our member organizations.

LD 2167 is aligned with our organization's mission. It addresses critical areas such as workforce opportunities, language learning, legal services, collaboration with stakeholders, and most importantly, data collection. The establishment of the advisory council ensures that diverse perspectives are considered.

LD 2176 emphasizes the importance of strategic collaboration in addressing the unique needs of Maine's immigrant communities. It highlights the need for effective resource utilization and establishing a strong foundation for the Office of New Americans.

Maine has seen an increase in immigrant population over the last decade, but we need to grow our infrastructure and state funding at the same rate to support their economic and social integration. MIRC believes that immigrants need to be developed intentionally and systematically.

LD 2176 aligns with MIRC's vision of building the capacity of immigrants. Passing this bill will address underemployment problems in Maine's new Mainers population and encourage multicultural students to remain in Maine after graduating.

This bill is crucial at this critical time in our country. Support services are necessary for immigrants to speed up their integration into the community and improve their readiness for work and school.

Passing LD 2176 will open up more employment opportunities across many other untapped sectors for multicultural populations, thereby advancing opportunity and economic equity for Maine's Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, as well as recent immigrants.

MIRC has been advocating for state coordination for five years. We are leading the way towards a future Maine that is built on principles of racial and social justice, economic security, and inclusion.

Today, we ask this committee to support us by passing this bill. This will ensure that Maine can compete in a growing multicultural workforce and economy. This moment calls for radical change in our state, and we should seize this opportunity, face our fears head-on, and embrace this change!

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Enhancing Immigrant Lives for a Stronger Maine!