

126 Sewall Street  
Augusta, Maine 04330-6822  
TTY/Voice: (207) 626-7058  
www.mainequaljustice.org



**Kathy Kilrain del Rio**  
Advocacy & Programs Director  
(207) 626-7058, ext. 210  
kathy@mejp.org

**MEJ Testimony in Opposition to of LD 2204, *An Act to Combat Racketeering in Scheduled Drugs by Certain Organizations***

February 21, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Kathy Kilrain del Rio, I use she/her pronouns, and I'm the Advocacy and Programs Director for Maine Equal Justice, a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. We are testifying today in opposition to LD 2204.

Maine Equal Justice is committed to advocating for laws and policies that move our state toward racial equity because all Mainers, regardless of our race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, or background deserve equity. If we are to undo centuries of racial bias in the criminal legal system, we must always be vigilant about the unintended consequences of policies being considered by the legislature. We are deeply concerned that RICO laws in other states have resulted in further disparities for people of color and we see nothing in this bill that would protect against similar outcomes in Maine. As research from the University of Cambridge found, too often in the implementation of RICO laws, "the illegitimate use of race as a proxy to construct, and then to prosecute, gang-related crime has destructive consequences for all races, but especially for racial minorities."<sup>1</sup>

We are further concerned about the bias expressed by Section 3 of the bill. People should not be excluded from owning real estate because of their country of origin. We shouldn't be constructing laws that divvy up who is deserving of access or not because of their immigration status, country of origin, race, ethnicity, religion, or characteristics like these. People from China, Cuba, Iran, Korea, and Russia should not face discrimination simply because of their background. This is a slippery slope of discrimination that we do not want to begin to slide down.

For these reasons and others you will hear today, we oppose LD 2204 and urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=mjrl>