

Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services.

My name is Anghy Tehuitzil, and I am a resident of Augusta, Maine. I represent Maine Youth Power, a youth-led youth movement building power to win human dignity, equity, access and a livable future across rural and suburban Maine. I am here today to ask that you oppose Language Part VV of LD210.

A budget cut that is a cruel and unjust provision that would devastate immigrant families across Maine. Families who have already fought against unimaginable hardships just to be here. Families who are already limited in education, housing, healthcare, and job opportunities. Families who, despite all of this, work tirelessly to contribute to Maine's economy and its diverse communities. These are the very people who fuel our economy, harvest our food, build and nourish our state. And now, with proposed cuts to state funding that would strip eligibility for SNAP and TANF are only adding more barriers to these families.

Not to disregard the fact that there are also many immigrant families that don't even know about these social programs that would greatly benefit from it. Likewise, many immigrants are afraid to apply due to language barriers, worry of deportation, or having to choose between their family needs vs their legal immigration status.

When my family and I came to this country, they had nothing except a hope and a dream to provide everything they didn't have for my sisters and I. Programs like SNAP and TANF were not just assistance—they were survival for us. They allowed us to put food on the table, keep a roof over our heads, achieve an education, and build the life they envisioned. I know firsthand what it feels like as a child to watch your parents struggle, to feel the weight of their exhaustion and their fear towards not knowing if they would be able to continue to give us support and protection—luckly I can say that they did and so much more! No youth should have to worry about where their next meal will come from or whether they will have a warm place to sleep. And yet, that is exactly what will happen if these cuts go through.

Maine Youth Power stands with immigrant communities and we ask you to do the same. They have given so much to our state and deserve basic human dignity, just like everyone else.

I urge you to oppose the unjust language in Part VV of LD 210.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anghy Tehuitzil

