

Crystal Cron
Presente! Maine
LD 422

Dear Members of the Committee on State and Local Government,

In Maine, we have always believed that our strength comes from our diverse communities working together – whether our families have been here for generations or arrived more recently seeking safety and opportunity. The dignity of every person, regardless of where they were born or what language they speak, is central to our Maine values of hard work, fairness, and looking out for our neighbors.

The very language of this bill refers to the “placement” of human beings as if we are furniture to be arranged rather than human beings who are making choices about where to live based on available opportunities, community connections, and resources – just like any other Maine resident. We are neighbors, workers, parents, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who contribute immeasurably to the economic and cultural fabric of Maine.

We must name the architects of this cruel legislation for what they are: politicians who weaponize racial resentment to maintain power while our communities struggle. These same lawmakers who claim to worry about "municipal burden" consistently vote against funding affordable housing, healthcare access, and living wages that would benefit all Maine residents and all Maine towns.

This bill does not emerge from community concerns – it is part of a deliberate strategy and national playbook designed to stoke resentment at newcomers and to pit working-class white Mainers against immigrants of color, ensuring we fight each other instead of uniting against the corporate interests and wealthy elites who profit from our division. By giving municipalities “veto power” over the placement of noncitizens, it creates a patchwork system where some towns become known as unwelcoming or exclusionary – of course, this is by design.

The consequences of LD 422 are not abstract. Maine faces critical workforce shortages across multiple sectors – and the passage of this bill would only worsen it. Our aging population and low unemployment rate mean that we need more workers, not fewer. Immigrants and asylum seekers pay taxes and bring valuable skills, entrepreneurial spirit, and cultural diversity that strengthen our communities and our economy, which will otherwise struggle with population decline. Without the vital contributions of immigrants, many Maine industries – from healthcare to agriculture to seafood – and small towns would face even greater challenges to their survival and growth.

This bill represents the latest example of political theater that would rather sow division than embrace the multiracial, multicultural future that is already unfolding across our state. Those who would use our immigration status as a weapon will find themselves on the wrong side of history – because the communities we are building together are stronger than the fears they exploit.

I urge this committee to reject LD 422.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal Cron
Executive Director, Presente! Maine