

Jennifer Melville
Freeport
LD 210

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Governor's proposed cuts to state-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for non-citizens. This proposal will make it even harder for our immigrant families to work full time jobs and feed their children. In 2020 we hosted an asylum seeking family, with whom we have remained close, and saw first hand how important Maine's support system is to enable immigrants to make a home here. As soon as they were granted permission to work, both parents in the family worked long hours in grueling jobs. Without Maine's support their children would go hungry as they struggle to pay rent and meet all their other needs.

We all benefit from immigrants staffing our businesses, picking our food, caring for our elders, and paying taxes to fund our state and local governments. Yet, many of the same people fueling our economy are ineligible for the same public benefits they help pay for based solely on their immigration status. Let us not further limit their benefits.

I hope you share my view that each and every person, regardless of immigration status, deserves food, health care, child care, a roof over their heads, and the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives. In Maine, we take care of our neighbors, we don't acquiesce to federal pressure, and we don't support discrimination.

Please reject Language Part VV of LD 210, which would repeal the unemployment hardship exemption for state-funded SNAP and TANF benefits. Please more equitably invest in services that benefit the most economically disadvantaged in our state and to speak up in defense of Maine's immigrant communities.

Many thanks for your service to all who call Maine home,

Jennifer Melville