

**Abouba Sidy Maiga**

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02/27/25.

**Maine State Legislature**

Maine State House  
2 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0002  
USA

**Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 471 – Expansion of Intensive English Language Programs**

Dear Members of the Maine State Legislature.

My name is Abouba Sidy Maiga, and I am currently a first-year student at the University of Maine. As an international student participating in the Intensive English Institute (IEI) program, I am writing to express my strong support for LD 471, which aims to establish a pilot program to expand intensive English language programs for learners. This bill represents a strategic opportunity for our state to strengthen workforce integration, stimulate economic growth, and improve the quality of life for individuals like me who are striving to master English to achieve success.

When I arrived in Maine as an international student, my English proficiency was limited, which made it difficult to integrate into the community and limited my professional opportunities. As a student on a visa, I am only allowed to work on campus, which restricts my financial and career prospects. Thanks to the IEI program, I have not only improved my language skills but also gained confidence and independence. This program has helped me understand local culture, build friendships, and prepare for my studies at the University of Maine. Without this support, I would not have been able to achieve my academic and professional goals. My experience illustrates the profound impact these programs can have on individuals' lives.

Maine is facing workforce shortages in critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and skilled trades. By expanding intensive English programs, LD 471 will enable thousands of individuals to acquire the language skills needed to fill these gaps. This will benefit not only individuals but also employers who need a skilled and competent workforce. Additionally, workers with stronger English skills integrate more quickly, reducing training costs and improving workplace productivity.

English proficiency is directly linked to higher wages, which leads to increased tax revenue and consumer spending, strengthening Maine's economy. Furthermore, this bill will reduce reliance on social services by promoting financial independence among learners. Finally, it will help retain internationally trained professionals who might otherwise leave Maine due to an inability to fully utilize their skills.

Maine has one of the oldest populations in the United States. Investing in the potential of English learners is essential to ensuring the state's long-term economic and demographic sustainability. Stable and prosperous communities reduce poverty rates and improve educational outcomes for families, creating a virtuous cycle of growth and well-being.

LD 471 also provides full scholarships to train new TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) instructors. This will create a sustainable pipeline of language educators, ensuring access to high-quality English programs for years to come. As a student who has directly benefited from these programs, I can attest to their transformative impact.

I strongly encourage you to support LD 471. This pilot program is a crucial step toward ensuring that all Maine residents, regardless of their background, have the tools they need to succeed. I would be honored to share my experience in greater detail during a hearing or to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your attention and for your commitment to education, inclusion, and economic prosperity in Maine. Together, we can make our state a model of success and opportunity for all.

Sincerely,  
Abouba