



National Nurses  
Organizing  
Committee



National  
Nurses  
United

23 Water Street  
Suite 301  
Bangor ME 04401  
t: 207-622-1057  
f: 207-623-4072  
msna@nnoc.net

**Testimony of Ashlynn Ward, RN**

**LD 471 “Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Expand  
Intensive English Language Learner Programs”  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
March 3, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable committee members, my name is Ashlynn Ward. I am a registered nurse at Eastern Maine Medical Center and a member of the Maine State Nurses Association, for which I am speaking today. I live in Bangor, and I am here to speak in support of LD 471 to expand intensive English language learner programs in Maine.

This bill establishes a 2-year pilot program to expand the intensive English language learner programs at the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine to an additional 780 students and gives them assistance with childcare and living expenses. This bill also increases the number of tuition waivers granted for attending the University of Southern Maine’s Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages online accelerated master's degree program.

Here in Maine, we benefit greatly from the migration of folks who come here from other, more troubled parts of the world. This is a tremendous thing for our economy, for our culture, and for the health of our communities. But for new Mainers to fully integrate, participate and become maximally productive members of our society, they must have access to resources that will allow them to increase their English language skills.

The result of more people entering our state, securing good employment, spending money in our local economy and paying taxes means more prosperity for all of us.

Many new Mainers are already or become healthcare workers and professionals. That, of course, is especially a good thing here in Maine, where our population is the oldest per capita in the country, and where the need for more caregivers is ever increasing.

Bottom line: we see a ton of benefit for expanding the number of people who can improve their English skills, and the number of people teaching those skills to others. The Maine State Nurses Association strongly supports this bill and asks that this committee vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 471.

Thank you.