

Rose Stansfield
New Gloucester
LD 471

Support for LD 471

I am an Office Administrator for a church within the Lewiston/Auburn community. In this capacity, I urged the leadership of our church to provide space, free of charge, for Auburn/Lewiston Adult Education's English Language Learners classes when they reached out to us looking for classroom space for the growing number of students moving to the city of Auburn.

Adult Education offered two classes per day on Mondays & Wednesdays. The students have become friends with our church members and our staff. The classes include people from China, Venezuela, Ukraine, Mexico, Burundi, Somalia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and many others.

Over the years, many people have come to my office to inquire about signing up for classes but I have to tell them that classes are full and there is a waiting list for enrollment. With two of the long-term instructors leaving due to retirement, the classes have been in jeopardy.

Recently, several short-term teachers have been leading the class and, for a while, it was shut down because there were no instructors available.

Many New Mainers enter our building looking for volunteer work as a requirement for receiving housing and food benefits from General Assistance. Many of these people hold professional jobs such as doctors, nurses, engineers, attorneys, architects, and accountants in their native countries. Others were skilled tradesmen and women, i.e. carpenters, welders, masons, machinists. We desperately need these people to help replace our aging workforce in Maine, but without proficiency in the English language with its many nuances, they are only able to work in menial jobs as custodians, bread-factory workers, or warehouse laborers.

Passing LD 471 will be an investment in Maine's economy by offering a career pathway for USM and U-Maine students as well as to our New Mainer population who have the training, the skills, and the desire to work hard for their new homeland. For this reason, I respectfully ask that you support this bill.

Sincerely,

Rose Stansfield