

## Testimony of Maureen Clancy, Cape Elizabeth, ME in support of LD1298

Please accept these comments in support of LD 1298. I spoke last year in support of LD1990. I am so pleased to see that further work has been done to address this issue and that new legislation is being heard to fix the problem. I understand that the state government is concerned about ensuring that social workers are safe and effective in serving the needs of Maine people. And that licensure testing has been part of that process for many years. I also understand that the current licensure test has been reported and documented to be biased by those who created the test. Systematic racism operates with or without intention and permeates our institutions. In this case it is now clear that this testing is biased and if we continue to use without alternative pathways we are intentionally contributing to systematic racism. Alternative pathways will allow us to remedy this test which unfairly limits who can be licensed as a social worker in our state.

A test alone does not ensure that a social worker is competent to do their job, but it does allow us, society and institutions, to feel that we have done our best to protect the needs of the community we serve. I completely understand this. My understanding of LD 1298 is to not give up on the licensure testing but to include other methods to ensure those with a license are safe, capable and effective in serving our communities. LD 1298 ensures there is a process that does not limit or set barriers to many who would be an asset to their field and to our state. Providing alternative pathways allows for other means of ensuring that those who carry a social work license are competent. And stops the state of Maine from unfairly limiting some people from being able to practice social work to the detriment of the communities we serve. There is now a workable solution in LD 1298 with effective measures that are fairly delivered to be sure we have the best and most competent people doing this vital work.

If we do not take action on LD 1298 then we are complacent in supporting and furthering systematic racism. With the knowledge we all have about these tests and the options now for alternative pathways, if we fail to pass LD 1298 we are all complacent in a racist system that unfairly limits the ability of people who have sacrificed to learn a skill they wish to use to serve the people who desperately need their help.

I respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1298.

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