



COALITION ON RACIAL EQUITY

4/14/25

RE: LD 165

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and the distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

The Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) would like to add our voices to the many that have urged you to vote ought not to pass on LD 165.

CORE actively pursues racial equity and justice in Maine by dismantling structural inequities and disparities. We actively pursue racial equity and justice by dismantling structural inequities and disparities through comprehensive education and advocacy efforts aimed at key decision-makers. We prioritize and center the needs of individuals and communities affected by these issues.

One of the most significant racial disparities in schools is found in disciplinary data. Black students are more likely to experience in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, than their white counterparts, for the same behaviors.

One study found that only 3.1 percent of Maine public school students are Black, yet Black students experienced 6.2 percent of in-school suspensions, 6.3 percent out-of-school suspensions, 6.5 percent of referrals to law enforcement, 8 percent of expulsions, and 18 percent of corporal punishments in school.¹ Providing educators with the ability to suspend kids in grade 5 and under for up to 5 days will not result in improved outcomes. It will simply exclude BIPOC students for longer periods of time from the education that they are entitled to receive.

We encourage you to vote ought not to pass on LD 165.

CORE members include:

ACLU Maine
Maine AFL-CIO
Defend Our Health
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Democracy Maine
Maine Equal Justice
Maine People's Alliance
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Women's Lobby
Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
NAACP
Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Maine Conservation Voters
Maine Youth Power

¹ U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, 2013 Civil Rights Data Collection, <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>.

