



MEJ Testimony in *Support* of LD 1202, An Act to Establish the African American Studies Advisory Council and Provide Funding to Support African American Studies

April 22, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Dina Malual and I am a Policy Advocate with Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. We are pleased to testify in support of LD 1202.

An education that includes contributions from groups that have been historically excluded from U.S. history is one that is accurate, truthful and inclusive. African American history is American history. Understanding the contributions and experiences of African Americans is essential to understanding the U.S. today. Ensuring Maine students receive an unbiased education is key to raising the next generation.

LD 1202 establishes an African American Advisory Council to serve as a resource to educators, schools and the Department of Education. There are many ways in which the advisory will support the teaching of African American studies. Below are a few examples:

1. Making recommendations to DOE regarding African American studies
2. Directing DOE to develop professional development opportunities for educators in African American studies
3. Identifying materials and resources for implementing African American studies

A complete curriculum in Maine schools sets students up for success. This bill maps out the changes we have all been calling for. LD 1202 promotes inclusive

education and prepares our students for an ever-changing world. I urge you all to support LD 1202. Thank you for your consideration.