

**Mayor and Council Offices**

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 25, 2025



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Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

*Before*

The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Service

*In Opposition to*

**LD 1707, An Act to Require a Person to Be a United States Citizen to Receive State or Local Financial Assistance and to Ensure Municipal Compliance with Federal Immigration Laws An Act to Provide Property Tax Relief to Maine Families**

April 25, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Committee, on behalf of the City of Portland, I write to express our strong opposition to LD 1707.

This bill would prohibit municipalities from providing financial assistance to individuals who are not U.S. citizens and would impose punitive measures against cities that are found to be noncompliant with federal immigration enforcement. Specifically, it seeks to eliminate state revenue sharing and General Assistance reimbursements to municipalities based on vague, politically motivated definitions of compliance with federal law. This proposal represents an overreach into local governance, and it would undermine the ability of cities like Portland to carry out our core responsibilities.

In Portland, we provide emergency services because it is our legal obligation and our moral duty. General Assistance is a safety net that exists to prevent human suffering and stabilize vulnerable individuals and families. Many of the people we serve are legally present in the United States, including asylum seekers and others in the process of obtaining legal status. These individuals are not undocumented; they are following a legal process established under federal law. Penalizing municipalities for offering them shelter, food, or basic care is not only unjust; it is fundamentally un-American.

It is also worth noting the contradiction embedded in this legislation. While its proponents claim to champion fiscal responsibility, the bill would jeopardize the very resources cities use to maintain essential public services, from emergency response to public health. That is not putting Maine—or America—first. It seeks to punish municipalities for exercising their lawful authority

to govern and provide for the general welfare, core functions protected under the principles of home rule and local self-governance embedded in our Constitution and traditions of federalism. Portland is proud to be a compassionate and forward-looking city. We are also proud to be a port of entry, a regional economic engine, and a home to immigrants who have enriched our culture and helped sustain our workforce. These are not liabilities; they are strengths. And at a time when our communities face unprecedented challenges, we must come together to bolster the institutions that support all residents, regardless of immigration status.

I respectfully urge the Committee to reject LD 1707 in its entirety. It is an affront to our values, a threat to our fiscal stability, and a distraction from the real work of building a stronger, healthier, and more united Maine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion  
Mayor  
City of Portland, Maine