

Good morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed Health and Human Services Committee members.

My name is Kerri Pitts, and I am a resident of Augusta. I am writing to you today **in opposition to LD 1707**. I believe it is a disgrace to consider taking public benefits away from those seeking a better life in our country. The majority of these individuals and families are hard-working, tax-paying, and contribute greatly to our economy. It is the responsibility of municipalities to assist in times of great need, that includes those of different backgrounds and citizenship status.

As a professional and personal advocate, I immerse myself in statistics and stories about our vital foreign-born community members daily. I analyze this data to humanize it, helping others understand the realities behind the mis and disinformation. For example, many people are misled to believe that immigrants are simply taking from our economy and not contributing back to it. This is a deceptive lie fueled by xenophobia. I will provide studies relating to immigrant economic contribution.

When considering our public benefits programs, they are facing massive scrutiny for simply providing for our neighbors in times of need. This bill is an additional attempt to cut those benefits even further when the people in our communities need more support than ever.

Please take into consideration the future of our state and country when making a decision on this legislative matter. Foreign-born folks are the backbone of our workforce and the culture of this incredible state. We have a duty to protect them in their most vulnerable situations, alongside those that are native-born. I urge you to vote **ought not to pass on LD 1707** to remain committed to all Mainers in times of great need. Thank you for your time and the work you do for your constituents.

Kerri Pitts
Policy Advocate
Augusta

[Facts About Immigration and the US Economy](#)

[Many Immigrant Families with Children Continued to Avoid Public Benefits in 2020, Despite Facing Hardships](#)

[Understanding Economic Integration in Immigrant and Refugee Populations: A Scoping Review of Concepts and Metrics in the United States](#)