

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Sara Gagné-Holmes
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence
11 State House Station
109 Capitol Street
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 624-4168; Toll-Free: (800) 442-6003
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-3455

May 2, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: 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*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information 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*. This bill would restrict both state and local funds from being issued as financial assistance to any person who is not a citizen of the United States. This bill redefines “eligible person” for the General Assistance program as a person who is a “citizen of the United States” and removes eligibility for any non-citizen who would otherwise be eligible by completing an affidavit by attesting to the pursuit of a lawful process. This would also remove eligibility for persons who are lawfully present but not U.S. citizens. This bill implements a penalty in the form of withholding reimbursement for any General Assistance reimbursement request, state revenue sharing amount, to any municipality which has a policy or ordinance that prevents a law enforcement officer from receiving information regarding immigration or citizenship status of any individual.

Language in Section 1 of this bill “Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary,” requires that the language that follows supersedes any other law that may contradict or potentially be in conflict with. As written in this bill, the language following this phrase, may conflict with federal regulations regarding Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program implementation which may result in costly litigation for the Department and place federal funding for these critical programs in jeopardy. This is also in direct conflict with Title 22, § 3104-A and § 3762 3. B. (2.). which provide for TANF and SNAP for legal aliens and noncitizens legally admitted into the United States.

Section 2 of this bill specifically amends eligibility for General Assistance provided by municipalities. The goal of General Assistance as stated in Title 22, § 4301 subsection 5, is to provide a service “for the immediate aid of persons who are unable to provide the basic necessities essential to maintain themselves or their families”. By providing essential resources, the GA program helps individuals overcome temporary hardships and take steps toward self-

support. Additionally, it plays a critical role in crisis situations by delivering emergency assistance to those facing life-threatening conditions or challenges beyond their control. Whether due to sudden illness, loss of housing, or other urgent situations, the program provides support to prevent harm and ensure the health and safety of those at risk, without discrimination regarding a person's nationality, age, or medical status.

Section 3 of this bill as written, will require municipalities to share information upon request with local law enforcement regarding the lawful or unlawful citizenship or immigration status of any individual. This may result in those who may be eligible for assistance and in dire need not request it due to fear of engagement with law enforcement.

The Department opposes this bill due to the expected detrimental impact to the well-being and economic security of Maine families.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ian Yaffe", followed by a horizontal line.

Ian Yaffe
Director
Office for Family Independence
Maine Department of Health and Human Services