

## LD 2016 Testimony

Thursday, Jan. 29

Maine is a beautiful and beloved state, one where we are surrounded by natural beauty. Travelers from all over the world are drawn to Maine to experience our rugged coastlines, mountains and rivers. They arrive and fall in love with our restaurants and people. They return due to the warmth and hospitality of Mainers.

When I grew up in Maine in the 1970s and 80s, this state looked different. Everyone looked about the same-white. Once I grew, traveled and lived outside of Maine, I began to experience diversity. This diversity added so much to the world I was exploring. After getting my teaching certificate and Master's of Education, I taught Kindergarten through 5th graders from around the world in Atlanta, Georgia. I witnessed the powerful love of immigrant parents as they worked incredibly hard to make life safer and to provide their children a better start in life.

Upon moving back to Maine, twenty years later, I was elated to see that Maine had changed drastically, for the better. The boom in the restaurant industry and influx of people from all over the world added so much to this state we all love. The changes could be seen in the variety of shopping, restaurants, music, art and lived experiences, making Maine a better place.

Today, my children are friends with kids from around the world. Our lives are enriched in so many ways by these friends. The diversity of students with different life experiences, interests, hobbies and goals is a microcosm of the world in which we live. The fear these families are currently experiencing is inhumane.

LD 2016 urgently needs to pass in order to protect the Constitutional rights and safety of vulnerable Maine residents. We need to protect children who depend on (and the adults who work at) public schools, healthcare facilities, daycares and libraries. Maine children deserve an education free of fear. Let's support the 21,000 children in Maine who are U.S. citizens with at least one non-citizen parent. Let's stop this cycle of trauma and fear. Let's pass LD 2016. Thank you.

Thank you,  
Libby Swinton Millar  
Concerned parent and community member

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Freeport

LD 2106

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