

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)
SUPPORTING L.D. 1544: An Act to Improve Economic Security for Maine Children by
Establishing the Maine Dependent Tax Credit**

Sponsor: Representative Maureen Terry
Public Hearing: Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 1:00pm

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, Members of the Committee on Taxation:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I live in the Androscoggin County city of Lewiston. I am the Advocacy Manager with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a statewide network of almost 100 member organizations all working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities through collaborative advocacy around systemic changes and smart policymaking.

We saw from the federal Child Tax Credit of 2021 just how successful and lifechanging policies like this can be; in Maine, child poverty decreased by 40%. L.D. 1544 is a chance for Maine to continue this successful program by making improvements to the state's dependent exemption tax credit for Maine residents who file a tax return.

As costs like housing, childcare, and groceries rise, low-income families would benefit from a fully refundable dependent tax credit. L.D. 1544 improves the existing policy by *including lowest-income families* who need the credit the most and by making the credit *fully refundable*. We are encouraged that this bill increases the credit *from \$300 to \$350* per dependent and allows for *annual adjustments* for inflation, too.

The Center on Poverty and Social Policy estimates over 3,000 Maine kids would be lifted out of poverty by this policy. That's a big deal! This policy would also support more than 150,000 Maine residents who provide direct care for family members who are aging and/or have disabilities. Speaking for the communities that MIRC serves, we know a disproportionate number of Maine's immigrant families are impacted by this.

MIRC is proud to join our partner organizations like Maine Equal Justice, the Maine Center for Economic Policy, the Maine Children's Alliance, and more in supporting L.D. 1544, and we hope that you will, too. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

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