

### Testimony in Favor of LD 2167

To The joint committee on state and Local Government

Governors, Senators, Representatives and honorable members of the joint  
Committee on State and Local Government

My name is Joao Venâncio, an immigrant from Portugal. I am here today representing  
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition and I am proud to serve. It's a great  
privilege to stand here today in testifying on the proposed bill LD 2167 aimed at  
establishing the Office for New Americans. I believe this initiative is not only timely  
but also essential for the continued growth, diversity, and inclusivity of this amazing  
State of Maine.

The proposed bill honors the promise of providing a centralized resource  
hub, offering critical support for New Americans as we embark on journeys to  
become valued members of society. By facilitating access to language services,  
employers opportunities, educational assistance, and many more, this office can  
significantly ease the integration process and contribute to the overall strength  
of our community. Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition believes that when we  
strengthen our immigrant community, we strengthen Maine as a whole.

As we move forward, let us embrace the values of diversity and inclusion that  
define our state. This bill is a powerful message of support and commitment, valuing the  
contributions of newcomers and that Maine is dedicated to ensuring New  
Americans success in our community.

We Immigrants and refugees are a Minority but a Majority at heart with a humongous will to contribute back to the state that welcomed and gave us a second chance to life. How ever as community leader I have seen many families leave Maine for other states taking with them valued skills and talent that Maine could benefit from. Establishing the Office of New Mainers will encourage new Americans to stay and contribute to the growth of Maine.

Maine thrives by its motto Dirigo meaning "I lead", "I direct" so today I urge our respective leaders to lead and direct in passing bill LD 2167 for a stronger Maine. I ask that you lend your support by recognizing the positive impact it can have on fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all residents in addition to bolstering Maines economy through hard working Mainers. This legislation aligns with the principles that make our community strong, vibrant, and forward-thinking.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can't wait to see this bill fall through and to witness the wonderful work that will come out of the proposed creation of the Office of New Americans. Your support will contribute to building a more resilient and united community.

Sincerely,

Joao B. Vemba

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