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Testimony of Rep. Deqa Dhalac in support of
LD 2222, An Act Establishing a State Calendar for the State of Maine
Before the Joint Select Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local, my name is Deqa Dhalac, and I represent House District 120. I am here to speak in support of **LD 2222, “An Act Establishing a State Calendar for the State of Maine.”**

I am also a proud member of the working group that came up with recommendations that resulted in this bill.

As you have heard, this bill will establish a state calendar outlining important religious observances or practices held by people in this state that may conflict with or prevent someone from meaningfully participate in a public event organized or hosted by a state agency or entity.

Last year, this committee held a meeting during the Muslim holy holiday, Eid, which is the day we celebrate after a long month of fasting over Ramadan. This day is meant to be spent with family and loved ones in celebration. I think of all of the people who might have wanted to participate in state government but could not, including fellow elected officials, staff and members of the public. I think we can all agree that everyone who wants to engage with their government should have the ability to do so.

The state calendar would be used as a resource for only state agencies – not public entities – to use so they are aware of religious holidays observed by Maine people when they are thinking about scheduling public things – like a public hearing or a gubernatorial debate. LD 2222 does create any additional paid state holidays for state employees so there would be no cost to the state.

I am grateful to have been included in the working group and I encourage you all to vote yes.