



COALITION ON RACIAL EQUITY

2/13/25

RE: LD 210, Biennial Budget

Senator Rotundo, Senator Ingerwersen, Representative Gattine, Representative Meyer and members of the Committees of Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services,

The Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) would like to add our voices to the many that have urged you to oppose the proposal in Language **Part VV** of **LD 210**, which would repeal the unemployment exception for state-funded SNAP and TANF. This proposal would cause harm to families and have a disproportionate impact on our immigrant neighbors.

Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) actively pursues racial equity and justice by dismantling structural inequities and disparities. We aspire to a world where influential decision-makers actively collaborate with affected individuals and communities, fostering a collective effort to dismantle oppressive laws, policies, and practices for a more equitable and just society.

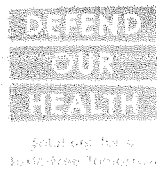
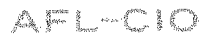
Welfare reforms passed by Congress in the 90's were steeped in racism and created two arbitrary categories of immigrants for the purposes of public benefit eligibility— "qualified" or deserving, and "not qualified" or undeserving. This carved out certain people with low-income from accessing programs, including SNAP and TANF, based solely on their immigration status.

Recognizing the value of these programs, Maine offers limited benefits to certain immigrants who would otherwise be eligible for federal assistance but for their immigration status through state-funded SNAP and TANF programs. To qualify, asylum seekers and certain green card holders with low-income must meet a 'hardship exception' which includes disability, domestic violence, and unemployment.

Finding work takes time and immigrants often face multiple barriers to employment beyond the approval of work authorization. Many people come to this country with skills and credentials that don't match the jobs available to them and often need English language education and other types of training to gain the necessary proficiencies to secure employment. Some immigrants also contend with racism and xenophobic prejudice that further exacerbate those challenges.

Punishing someone for not finding a job fast enough by taking away their SNAP benefits is both cruel and short-sighted. Permission to work, and the mere availability of jobs does not equate to immediate employment. In Maine, we believe *everyone* deserves food, health care, child care, a roof over their heads, and the support they need to lead healthy and productive lives—no matter their income or immigration status.

The members of CORE urge you to oppose this proposal.

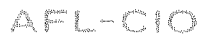




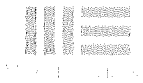
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CORE members include:

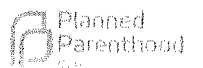
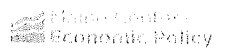
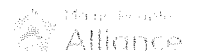
- ACLU Maine
- Maine AFL-CIO
- Defend Our Health
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
- Democracy Maine
- Maine Equal Justice
- Maine People's Alliance
- Maine Center for Economic Policy
- Maine Women's Lobby
- Planned Parenthood of Northern New England
- NAACP
- Maine Youth for Climate Justice
- Maine Conservation Voters



Coalition for a
Climate-Fair Economy



Maine Initiatives



Mission

The Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) actively pursues racial equity and justice by dismantling structural inequities and disparities through comprehensive education and advocacy efforts aimed at key decision-makers. We prioritize and center the needs of individuals and communities affected by these issues.

Vision

The Coalition on Racial Equity aspires to a world where influential decision-makers actively collaborate with affected individuals and communities, fostering a collective effort to dismantle oppressive laws, policies, and practices for a more equitable and just society.