

**Testimony in support of LD #471:
Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program
to Expand Intensive English Language Learner Programs**

**Submitted to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
of the 132nd Maine Legislature, First Regular Session
Monday, March 3, 2025**

Good morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable committee members. My name is Allison Long. I live in Buckfield in Oxford County, and I am here to testify in support of LD #471. I speak today only on my own personal behalf and not for any organization or employer.

This June, I will complete my sixth year as an English language instructor for adult new Mainers. My ELL teaching experience has been through nonprofit organizations that serve our immigrant neighbors, and I have seen the great need for intensive English instruction. The many students I have taught over the years have been mostly beginning English speakers with little to no grasp of the language. They are deeply committed to learning, study incredibly hard, and want desperately to improve their English so they can work.

I have taught journalists, international relations professionals, petroleum engineers, seamstresses, entrepreneurs, pharmacists, nurses, educators, and so many others with training and experience in their careers. Failing to take advantage of their talents is a terrible disservice to our state. These professionals need intensive, effective English instruction and practice in order to pursue their career goals here in Maine. This program would be a significant step in meeting that massive need.

The stipends included in this bill are crucial to its success. Almost all of the students I've worked with would not have been able to attend English classes without transportation and childcare. These are essential components to the students' success and I am thrilled to see them included in this bill.

LD #471's pilot program represents the type of investment that will truly benefit the people of Maine. Our immigrant neighbors want desperately to work, support their families, and become an active part of our state's economy. This program would be a critical step in affirming them as welcome contributors to thriving communities throughout Maine.

Please vote LD #471 "Ought to Pass". Thank you for your time.