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March 10, 2025

Testimony of Representative Mana Abdi presenting

LD 724, An Act to Recognize Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as State Holidays

Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. It is a pleasure to be back before this committee.

My name is Mana Abdi, and I represent House District 95, which includes a portion of Lewiston. I am here today to introduce **LD 724, An Act to Recognize Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as State Holidays**. This bill seeks to establish Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state holidays, with the Governor designating the specific dates each year.

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, a sacred month of fasting, prayer, and reflection for Muslims worldwide.

Eid al-Adha coincides with the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, a religious obligation for practicing Muslims and a time of sacrifice, generosity, and community.

For Muslims living in Maine, these holidays hold the same significance as Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving. Yet, unlike these widely recognized holidays, Muslim Mainers often face the dilemma of choosing between their faith and work or school obligations.

I immigrated to this country at 11 years old, and Eid was always a time of joy, family, and togetherness. The celebrations were filled with food, laughter, and, like any child, I especially looked forward to the sweets and gifts. But when I arrived in the United States, I quickly realized Eid was not recognized. I had to choose between attending school and celebrating my faith. That choice became exhausting, and over time, the spirit of Eid faded.

As an adult, this conflict persists. Last Eid, instead of celebrating with my family, my colleagues, Rep. Ambureen Rana, Rep. Deqa Dhalac, and I had to attend a legislative session at the State House.

While we are dedicated to public service, it was difficult to choose between our responsibilities and our faith. And we are not alone – Muslims in Maine face this dilemma every year.

This bill is also a matter of equity. Holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving are built into the existing system, allowing employees time off without using personal leave. Muslim employees, however, often have to use their earned time to observe Eid, creating an unfair disparity in workplace policies. Recognizing Eid ensures that Muslim Mainers receive the same acknowledgment as others, fostering a sense of belonging and strengthening Maine's workforce. When employees feel valued and respected, they are more engaged and committed to their workplaces. Eid celebrations also drive economic activity in retail, grocery stores, and restaurants, benefiting local businesses.

Maine prides itself on fairness, diversity, and community. Our state motto is "Dirigo" – I lead. Let's live up to that principle by supporting LD 724 and making Maine a leader in inclusivity and equity. I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

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Maine State Holidays
- **New Year's Day,** January 1st
- **Martin Luther King, Jr., Day,** the 3rd Monday in January
- **Washington's Birthday,** the 3rd Monday in February
- **Patriot's Day,** the 3rd Monday in April
- **Memorial Day,** the last Monday in May, but if the Federal Government designates May 30th as the date for observance of Memorial Day, the 30th of May
- **Juneteenth,** June 19th
- **Fourth of July**
- **Labor Day,** the first 12 Monday of September
- **Indigenous Peoples Day,** the 2nd Monday in October
- **Veterans Day,** November 11th
- **Thanksgiving**
- **Christmas Day**