



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Mike Tipping. I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and I'm proud to present **LD 783, An Act to Continue Support for the Maine Multicultural Center.**

The Maine Multicultural Center is an amazing group of local volunteers who have taken on the responsibility of integrating new Mainers in our communities in the Bangor area. Last term, this committee passed a bill to provide one-time state funding for their efforts. It was passed in both chambers and funded off the table. LD 783 would continue that funding and allow them to continue their important work.

Because of the legislature's support over the last year, MMCC has been able to fund the work of a program manager and two outreach coordinators and secure new private and federal funding.

They've trained a network of dozens of local volunteers who are assigned to new families moving to our area. They form a strong, personal relationship and help them integrate into the community. They assist them in getting jobs, finding housing, pursuing education, navigating a new culture and contribute to our state.

These volunteers provided more than 4,700 hours of their time last year and because of their work we have families that are thriving and important jobs are being filled. I personally know of a new tailor, a machinist and a cabinet maker in our area who we didn't have last year. We have new CNAs at retirement homes and nurses at Eastern Maine Medical Center. One family opened a new restaurant in my district.

This is one of those rare pieces of policy these days; a bipartisan bill on immigration. No matter our ideological background, I think we can all agree that supporting these volunteers in doing this important work is both beneficial for our communities and saves our state a lot of money.

Over the last year, MMCC has done exactly what they promised this committee they would do with our support. They've professionalized their work, sought new sources of ongoing funding, connected with other local organizations to amplify their programs and have made sure that new families continue to be welcomed and integrated in the Bangor area.

If we want to continue to be a welcoming state with vibrant communities and a labor force that meets our needs, we should continue to support their vital work.

I appreciate your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.