

Testimony in Support of LD 1593, An Act to Require Certain Public Entities to Define Their  
Use of the Term "Equity"

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, members of the State and Local Government  
Committee-

My name is Jon Reisman. I am an emeritus professor of economics and public policy from the University of Maine at Machias and a Selectman for the Town of Cooper. I am testifying in strong support of LD 1593, An Act to Require Certain Public Entities to Define Their Use of the Term "Equity".

A series of FOAA's has revealed that **Maine State Government has no definition of "equity"**, despite broadly promoting "equity" as part of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies and as part of specific policy initiatives such as the Climate Action Plan. **Promoting an undefined policy goal is pure policy malpractice.**

A partial list of Maine State Government entities with no definition of equity includes the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, the Departments of Environmental Protection, Administrative and Financial Services, Labor, Health and Human Services (DHHS), Public Utilities Commission, Public Advocate, University of Maine System (including the Law School), Secretary of State and Attorney General. DHHS cited this (non) definition from the DHHS DEI Strategic Plan: *Equity – when barriers are identified and removed to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all.*

Despite not having a definition of equity, the Climate Action Plan developed a number of equity metrics with the assistance of the University of Maine's Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions. This is egregious and aggravated policy malpractice.

Although K-12 public education is equally guilty of such equity policy malpractice, an amendment to restrict coverage to state level entities is a good idea to get started and avoid a mandate flag.

President Trump is trying to nuke DEI. LD 1593 is a proposal to bring transparency and sunlight to equity policy, as opposed to a gag. Requiring a definition of equity and associated metrics is the minimum action this legislature should take to protect the State from the arbitrary and capricious liabilities our equity policies have created.

I would be happy to answer any questions.