



COALITION ON RACIAL EQUITY

## Testimony in Support of LD 590

Date: 1/21/26

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Beth Allen and I am here today representing the Coalition on Racial Equity (CORE) to testify in strong support for LD 590, "An Act Regarding the Inclusion of Racial and Other Demographic Data from State Agencies in the Legislative Process."

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 people and communities, fostering a collective effort to dismantle oppressive laws, policies, and practices for a more equitable and just society.

LD 590 builds on the work of this committee that began in the 130th Legislature<sup>1</sup> completed in the 131st Legislature<sup>2</sup> to establish standards across state governments for how data is collected, stored, and accessed by the public, and to provide policymakers with a better understanding of our population. Valid and informative data is essential to understand the scope of social, economic and health inequities in our state. Careful examination of that data will help identify the factors contributing to them, and ongoing monitoring of the data is critical to ensure progress towards comprehensive, long-term reductions in disparities.

LD 590 will designate a position in the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis to complete this examination using existing resources. This data will help state legislators and stakeholders gain important insights into the impact of potential legislation on individuals across Maine, especially on communities that have been historically disadvantaged. This information would be based on demographic data including, but not limited to, gender, location, race, ethnicity, birth sex, citizenship, socioeconomic status, education, sexual orientation, veteran status, disability status and age.<sup>3</sup> The Office of Policy and Legal Analysis has experience and expertise conducting bill analysis in an efficient and timely manner, and is the logical department to oversee this work.

Maine and the United States have an unfortunate, long history of enacting policies that disadvantage people of color that have created generations of economic and social disparities.<sup>4</sup> To avoid making these worse, and to address existing inequalities, lawmakers need to be

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<sup>1</sup> LD 1610, "An Act To Promote Equity in Policy Making by Enhancing the State's Ability To Collect, Analyze and Apply Data," <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1199&item=5&snum=130>

<sup>2</sup> LD 1948, "An Act to Amend the State's Data Governance Program," <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1252&item=3&snum=131>

<sup>3</sup> As specified LD 1948

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.pcritp.me/sites/pcritp.me/files/inline-files/State\\_of\\_Disparities.pdf](https://www.pcritp.me/sites/pcritp.me/files/inline-files/State_of_Disparities.pdf)

equipped with data on the impacts of future policy. Data and analysis on how proposed legislation stands to impact different demographics across the state – for good or for ill – can only help lawmakers make better-informed decisions about policy and how to best serve all of their constituents. This data will also create increased transparency into the lawmaking process, helping Mainers better understand how proposals considered in the State House might impact them, their families, and their neighbors.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 590 to move us towards more evidence-based anti-racist policy-making.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**CORE members include:**

- ACLU Maine
- Defend Our Health
- Democracy Maine
- Maine Equal Justice
- Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
- 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
- Maine Youth Power