



Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS

Testimony in Support of LD 590
***An Act Regarding the Inclusion of Racial and Other Demographic Data from State
Agencies in the Legislative Process***

January 21, 2026

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Sam Zuckerman. I am the Policy Coordinator of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. I am here today to testify in support of LD 590, “An Act Regarding the Inclusion of Racial and Other Demographic Data from State Agencies in the Legislative Process.”

The Permanent Commission’s role is to examine racial disparities across all systems and advise the Maine State Government on ways to improve the status and outcomes of historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations. Data is essential to the work that we do because it helps us track disparities over time and to determine which policies are working. Data also helps us to understand why disparities exist and what other issues they intersect with. Data is essential to our ability to address the systemic nature of many of these inequalities.

The Permanent Commission supports LD 590 because it advances Maine’s ability to take an evidence-based approach to policymaking by ensuring that demographic data is brought before committees of the Legislature. The Permanent Commission views accurate, consistent, and complete data as critical to understanding the needs and experiences of the diverse population that the Maine State Government serves.

Often, policies that appear to be “race neutral” at face value have disparate impacts on people of color. And these disparate impacts are not limited to any one policy area – health, education, wealth, and incarceration are all examples of policy areas where laws may be

broadly framed, but where disproportionate outcomes have been documented.¹ In light of the known disparities, ensuring that demographic data is considered consistently in the legislative process is important for ensuring that systemic disparities are not perpetuated due to a lack of information.

We urge you to pass this bill to ensure that future legislators have access to all relevant data when making policy decisions. Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

¹ Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. 2024. State of Racial Disparities Report. https://www.pcritp.me/sites/pcritp.me/files/inline-files/State_of_Disparities.pdf