

I write in support of LD 320, An Act to Support the Maine Multicultural Center. The Maine Multicultural Center (MMCC) has operated as an all-volunteer organization since its inception with the purpose of supporting new Mainers who come to the greater Bangor area and to educate current citizens of the area about the benefits of having a multicultural society. In October Catholic Charities opened a branch office in Brewer to begin the process of bringing refugees and asylum seekers to the greater Bangor area. We were told there could be up to 50 people coming in the first year. We have since helped 31 individuals begin the transition to their new lives. In the next year the number we have been allotted will be up to 100 individuals.

The funds from this legislation will support the hiring of staff to coordinate the work involved in providing housing, language learning, education, employment, health care, and the many other needs of the refugees we will welcome. Statistics show that immigrants start new businesses at a higher rate than native-born citizens and work hard to contribute financially as well as culturally, meaning the return on the investment of this legislation will be magnified.

I urge support for this legislation.

Joan J. Ellis
Hudson, Maine
207 327-2183

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