



**Testimony of Beth White
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989**

**In Support of LD 1971, An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of
State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities,
Sponsored by Representative Deqa Dhalac**

**Before the Committee on Judiciary
Monday, May 19th, 2025 at 1pm, State House Room 438 and Electronically**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary, I'm Beth White, Director of Politics and Legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. We are a labor union representing over 13,000 Maine workers, including workers in all three branches of Maine State Government.

We're here today in support of LD 1971, specifically the proposed language in section 4 of §4762 which would prohibit state employees, other than law enforcement officers, from inquiring about a person's immigration status unless "determining the person's immigration status is necessary for the determination of program, service or benefit eligibility or the provision of state services" or "the state employee is required by federal or state law or by court order to inquire about the person's immigration status".

This language would protect state employees from having to ask about immigration status when it is not directly related to their work or required by law. As many of you are aware, state employees are already underpaid and working in understaffed departments; requiring them to add the additional task of asking about immigration status when it is not related to their work would be yet another unnecessary burden on them. Requiring workers who have not been trained in immigration law to ask about immigration status could also lead to real or perceived racial profiling or discrimination. Additionally, members of the public may be less willing to access services they are entitled to by law if they fear that the worker processing their applications or helping them might inquire about their immigration status unnecessarily.

For all of these reasons, we encourage the committee to support LD 1971 and to ensure the language related to state employees is included if any amendments or changes are made. Thank you.