



Testimony in Support of LD 2: An Act To Require the Inclusion of Racial Impact Statements in the Legislative Process

February 25, 2021

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, this joint testimony is from both Michael Tarpinian - a Community Volunteer, Retired CEO of The Opportunity Alliance and Quincy Hentzel – CEO of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. We are currently Co-Chairs of Thrive2027's Public Policy & Advocacy Committee. We submit this written testimony on behalf of Thrive2027 to lend Thrive2027 support to the Inclusion of Racial Impact Statements in the Legislative Process as provided in LD 2.

Thrive2027 is our community's commitment to making Cumberland County stronger for everyone who calls it home. Powered by the community and led by United Way of Greater Portland. More than 300 business, non-profit, public, and community organizations have endorsed three 10-year goals that promise a measurable and meaningful change in Greater Portland. These three goals are to (1) give kids a strong start, (2) empower neighbors to thrive – not just survive, and (3) help us all live longer, better.

Thrive2027 is not a new program – it is a new way of working. At the heart of this work is reviewing disaggregated data to understand where needs and gaps exist, determining what the implications of that data are, and identifying concrete solutions that can be implemented to address them.

A review of the racial disparity data we have in Cumberland County indicates people of color fare worse than white counterparts on almost all, if not every, population-level measure. This is shown in these following racial disparities examples:

1. 11% of all children live in poverty with 44% of Black/African American children living in poverty. (U.S. Census, 2019).
2. 97% of white individuals over the age of 25 years have a high school diploma while 78% of Black/African American individuals over the age of 25 years have a high school diploma. (U.S. Census, 2019)
3. From 2016-2018 Black individuals lost 2000 more years of life as compared to white individuals due to complex factors, such as lack of access to health care. (2016-2018 National Center for Health Mortality File)
4. The median household income for white families was \$76,487, while for Black/African American families, it was \$34,898. (SAIPE, 2019).

LD 2 represents a small but powerful step forward in accelerating our State's response to racial equity. By reviewing the potential impact of legislation on historically disadvantaged racial populations, we can better ensure public policies can create a more equitable and resilient community for everyone.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage your support of LD 2.

Thank you for your leadership and service.