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I am writing in support of LD 1034.

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations has important work to do, but without funding for staff support, that work will be seriously hampered.

The Permanent Commission was created to help Maine grapple with centuries of systemic racism. Racism is not just in our past; it is in our present. Asian-American Mainers have been attacked on zoom and in our streets; Latinx Mainers have been discriminated against when they enter stores. Black Mainers, both those born in Maine and those who have come as immigrants and asylum seekers, face discrimination and are the victims of unfair policies.

Those who serve on the Permanent Commission are volunteering their time, but without funding for staff to conduct research, prepare written materials, and organize public engagement the work they committed to doing will not be done.

Racial injustice doesn't just harm people of color; it harms all of us. Funding the Permanent Commission is a step toward fairness and equity in our laws and essential if the Maine legislature is serious about dismantling systemic racism.

Please support and fund LD 1034, An Act to Support Funding the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations.