

April 14, 2021 TESTIMONY OF STEFANIE TRICE GILL, Founder | Lead Diversity Recruiter IntWork, LLC
in support of

LD 1034 – “An act to provide funding to the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations”

Dear Honored Members of the Committee on State and Local Government:

I'm Founder and CEO of IntWork, Maine's premier diversity recruiting and executive search firm that helps Maine companies recruit for hard-to-fill STEM and leadership positions.

I'm speaking in favor of **LD 1034** to provide funding to support the **Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations**.

The Permanent Commission is a valuable vehicle to help Maine address its legacy of racism. With staffing, the Permanent Commission can assist policymakers and the public to understand and proactively address the underlying factors that contribute to racial disparities and inequalities.

Without funding, racial disparities and inequalities will continue to persist, hurting Maine's people, quality of life, businesses, and economy.

How does supporting the Commission affect our economy?

At IntWork, we collaborate with many Maine employers struggling to fill key roles that, left open, impede their ability to do business.

One prominent barrier to attracting talent to -- and keeping talent in -- Maine is our State's longtime practice of labeling newcomers as "from away". This does indeed push people away; particularly people of color and religious minorities who, even after years of living and paying taxes here are still seen as "from away". This Maine expression is rooted in a deep xenophobic tradition that drives away many potential residents -- and businesses.

Nationally, there is a shortage of skilled STEM professionals, with an average of 1 candidate for every 13 job openings. When Maine employers compete with other states to talent -- or even just to retain talent grown here, in Maine -- one very real barrier is that we are less welcoming and inclusive of newcomers, particularly of people of color, than other states. In trying to help employers recruit and retain talent, I've witnessed how this hurts Mainers and hurts the Maine economy, time and time again.

A fully-funded commission would provide recommendations to inform current and future legislators on how to develop legislation that will combat and eliminate racial disparities in Maine and help build new traditions of equity, welcoming, and inclusion.

I ask you to support LD1034 that will fund the Permanent Commission and help us open doors for diverse people living in -- and wanting to live in -- Maine to call this state their own.

Thank you.

Stefanie Trice Gill
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