



**Troy D. Jackson**  
President of the Senate

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
130th Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony in Support of LD 1034**

***An Act to Provide Funding to Support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations***

**Presented to the Committee on State and Local Government  
Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Troy Jackson. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and have the great honor of representing Senate District 1, which is made up of the good people of Northern Aroostook County. I am here today to testify in support of LD 1034, "An Act to Provide Funding to Support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations." I want to start by thanking Rep. Rachel Talbot-Ross for putting this bill forward and for her continued leadership on the Permanent Commission's important work.

There is no question that we are a nation still grappling with the ugliness of racism and widespread systemic injustices. This legacy of injustice and inequity is not just a part of our past but very much a part of our present. It's why I join you all with a heavy heart this morning as our nation once again mourns the senseless killing of a young Black man, Daunte Wright, at the hands of a police officer. I can only imagine the pain his friends and family are dealing with him, especially his partner, knowing her son will grow up without his father – all over an expired license plate.

This tragedy comes at a time when our nation is already on edge – anxiously watching the trial of Derek Chauvin, the police officer accused of murdering George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man whose death sparked a long overdue national reckoning. It also comes as our nation continues to battle a global pandemic that has disproportionately impacted Black and brown people in this country and further exposed the glaring racial inequities in our public health system.

There's no question we are at a pivotal moment in our state and country's history. For too long Indigenous Mainers and People of Color have been left out of vital conversations that have wide reaching impacts on their lives. As lawmakers, we owe it to the people of this state to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table, to right the wrongs of the past and to lay out a thoughtful, inclusive and equitable path for the future.

In 2019, the Maine Legislature created the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations. It marked the beginning of our work to confront systemic racism and

make Maine a leader in racial equity. It was a good first step, and the commission wasted no time getting to work. In its 2020 report, members of the commission identified 46 bills that were before the 129th Legislature that would address disparities in basic rights and needs, criminal justice, education, employment, housing, tribal sovereignty, and others. This year, the commission worked to pass a new law requiring the Maine Legislature to consider racial impact statements when considering bills before the Maine Legislature.

It's clear that the commission has the potential to help us better understand racial disparities in our state's social, health and economic systems and build a state where all people, especially those from historically marginalized communities can thrive. But to do this work, it requires vital resources and support. Otherwise, how can we expect the commission to make any lasting and meaningful progress?

As I've said before, our job is to do everything in our power to improve the lives of the people we represent. It's not enough to pass legislation that sounds good on paper or adopt policy proposals with good intentions. We must ensure the laws we pass deliver for and do right by Maine people, especially Indigenous Mainers and People of Color. This commission does the important work of ensuring that legislation adequately addresses both the sources and the results of systemic racism and I cannot think of a more deserving priority for our legislature as we determine how to allocate our financial resources. I urge you to pass this bill and to ensure that all Mainers' voices are heard. Thank you.

Troy D. Jackson  
Senate President  
Senate District 1