

Testimony of Jeff McCabe, Director of Politics and Legislation, MSEA-SEIU Local 1989, Before the Joint
Standing Committee on State and Local Government

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, Sponsored by Representative Mike Sylvester for the
Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Maine Tribal Populations

10:01 AM April 14, 2021, SH Room 214

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and members of the Committee on State and Local Government, I'm Jeff McCabe, and I am the Director of Politics & Legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union (MSEA-SEIU Local 1989). Maine Service Employees Association is a labor union representing over 13,000 workers and retirees, mainly in the public sector, statewide. I am here today in support of LD 1043. This bill would provide much needed funding to support the work of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Maine Tribal Populations.

During the 129th session, the Legislature took an important step toward addressing the racial inequities that exist in Maine by passing LD 777 and establishing the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Maine Tribal Populations. This Commission is tasked with examining racial disparities across all systems in our state, and to work at improving the status and outcomes for historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations in Maine. The Permanent Commission already done important work to identify critical legislation in the 129th and make recommendations to the Legislature about ways they can work address racial inequities.

As the Permanent Commission noted in their [2020 Report](#), "Maine is not immune to the structural racism that has held back racial, Indigenous, and Maine tribal populations over decades and centuries. Black Mainers are six times as likely to be incarcerated as white Mainers. Maine's tribal populations are treated like municipalities rather than the sovereign nations they are, and have been since long before Maine was established." I would encourage members of the Committee to reference the report as you continue your work during the 130th to see firsthand the importance of the work that this Permanent Commission is doing.

The work that the Permanent Commission is doing is long overdue and will have a positive impact on all Mainers statewide. For generations, racial disparities have plagued our state, and while we have taken steps towards addressing these disparities, the work is far from complete. The Permanent Commission is absolutely critical in working to ensure that the State of Maine is somewhere where all people are able to thrive and where no one is burdened by racial disparities, but they cannot complete their work without the proper funding. I would encourage this Committee to please vote "ought to pass" on LD 1043. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.