

Rev. Allison Smith
Harpwell

My name is Rev. Allison Smith and I thank the Committee for the ability to testify. I am here to share how important it is that our actions match our words. To speak about the values of human dignity and worth, justice for all people regardless of background, and building a Maine that provides hope for all is important, but those words now need to be followed up with commitment and sustained action. This means making a financial investment that will undergird and continue the valuable work of the Permanent Commission. In my faith community and family, we sometimes talk about how budgets are faith statements. In other words, budgets and how we use the resources entrusted to us, demonstrate what we value.

Tragically, we can see the effects of racism and systemic racism in the lives of people we know and love in Maine--in the realms of socioeconomics, the criminal justice system, and healthcare. I believe that to dismantle racism, in addition to opening hearts and minds, we must construct our laws and institutions in ways that rectify racial inequity. Addressing disparities caused by complex factors over generations will take every tool in our tool box and we cannot afford to wait a moment longer. Our young people are being negatively and tragically affected by these disparities every day!

I urge your strong support of LD 1034 as the next important step in creating the Maine we hope for—one where every person, no matter their background, can thrive--adding their gifts to the beautiful fabric of the Maine we know and love.

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