

Testimony of Garrett A. Stewart, Sr.
In Support of LD 1034
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
April 14, 2021

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Garrett Stewart, Sr. and I have the honor of serving as a commissioner on the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations. Specifically, I serve as a representative of organized labor with expertise in labor rights and working conditions. I am testifying in support of LD 1034 on behalf of A. Philip Randolph Institute (Maine Chapter) and the Permanent Commission.

- I am a union organizer and acting president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, a member of the executive board of the AFL-CIO as well as local labor unions. I am active in these roles and often have people come to me with concerns about disparities in their workplaces and institutions.
- I am also a Black man who was born and raised in Maine and have the lifelong experience living in a place with an overwhelmingly white population.
- My personal investment into the Permanent Commission.
 - o I bring these perspectives to the work of the Permanent Commission and am committed to that work.
 - o However, when I first joined, I expected we would meet occasionally – maybe monthly – but with the work that needed to be done in 2020, and with little-to-no staff support, we have met far more frequently.
 - o I, like others, have a full-time job and am providing my expertise to the Permanent Commission on a voluntary basis.
 - o Even worse, our time and efforts aren't supported with resources, which requires us to step in to perform administrative and coordinating tasks.
 - o This level of work is not sustainable and puts the Commission itself at risk.
 - o Many of us are juggling our children's remote schooling in addition to our jobs, committees and commitment to the Commission.

For these reasons, I hope you will vote “ought to pass” on LD 1034. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.