

Gail Witherill  
Cumberland

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the State and Local Committee,

I would like to encourage the Committee's support for LD 1034: An Act To Provide Funding To Support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations. The formation of the Permanent Commission through legislation in 2019 was a pivotal move to begin our state's examination of the disparities in treatment and access to opportunities across all our government systems for Mainer's of color and those from our Indigenous and Tribal populations. From socioeconomic disparities to criminal justice and public health disparities, there is some documentation, but so much more needs to be done to establish the extent of the disparities and to formulate effective approaches with legislation to assure fair and equitable treatment for these Mainers. Many of us are going thru a reckoning with our history.... details left out, not covered fairly, or glossed over; preferential treatment of some over others; uneven access to opportunities whether thru lack of communication, effects of legislation, or administration of programs; the use of power of representation for some but not for all. All of you are investing your time and energies to make sure Maine government and its resources are as fair and equitable as possible. I want, as you do, a Maine whose government and administrative offices and departments treat all residents fairly, no matter where they live, who they are, what power they wield, the color of their skin, their income, their livelihood. Funding LD 1034 is an investment in the effort to fund the work that needs to be done to fully understand and address the disparities across all our systems, and to mitigate those disparities. I urge an Ought to Pass on LD 1034.

Thank you all for your time and your public service,

Sincerely,

Gail Witherill  
Cumberland, ME