



May 3, 2021

Senator Joe Baldacci  
Representative Ann Matlack  
Committee on State and Local Government  
Cross Building, Room 214  
Augusta, ME 04333

Submitted via Legislature's Testimony Submissions portal

**Re: LD 1340, An Act To Ensure Municipal Compliance with Federal Immigration Laws**

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am a lawyer who has specialized in immigration law and policy for more than 30 years, and am also the director of the Maine Business Immigration Coalition (MeBIC). MeBIC is Maine's only resource dedicated to providing information, education and advocacy on immigration and related issues from and for the business and economic perspective. MeBIC strongly opposes LD 1340.

Recently, nearly 100 Maine businesses, chambers of commerce, trade associations, and higher education institutions signed the [Maine Compact on Immigration](#) (attached) urging state leaders to "adopt policies and practices to help Maine become a destination of choice for immigrants to the U.S." The Compact also includes the principle that **"(I)ocal law enforcement resources should focus on criminal activities, not on civil violations of federal code."** Federal immigration violations within the U.S. are civil violations.

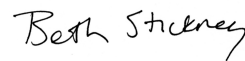
LD 1340 would make Maine a less welcoming state for immigrants, at a time that Maine's population is aging, our workforce is shrinking, and deaths outpace births. The recently released 2020 decennial Census data shows that Maine grew at only two-thirds of its 2000 to 2010 rate, and at a rate that was only one-third of the nation's growth rate. The latter was the second lowest rate of growth in the U.S. since 1790. Yet Maine's economy is beginning to rebound from the pandemic, and employers are already experiencing worker shortages. To have a strong economic future, Maine needs immigrants to want to move to and stay here. LD 1340 encourages a hostile climate towards immigrants. That is the opposite of what Maine needs.

Moreover, LD 1340 sees a problem where none exists. Precisely zero Maine municipalities have laws or policies refusing to comply with Section 642 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.<sup>1</sup>

Also, municipalities, particularly those with established or growing immigrant populations, or that want to attract immigrants, should be able to exercise local control to prohibit immigration status inquiries for multiple reasons. Chief among them is to prevent profiling. Police are unlikely to ask me, a white native Mainer, about my immigration status during a traffic stop. But without a prohibition, police officers might, and indeed do, ask persons of color with accented English about their immigration status, even though they might be U.S. citizens, just like me, or have myriad other legal immigration statuses. This kind of police action can fuel distrust and discourage immigrants from reporting crimes or coming forward as witnesses, making entire communities less safe. State funding for municipalities should not be at risk, as LD 1340 would require, if they direct their local police not to ask about immigration status.

Because of immigration law's complexity, its civil, not criminal nature, the ease with which local law enforcement officers could profile immigrants, and the resulting hostile environment that could make immigrants feel unwelcome in Maine, LD 1340 is the type of law MeBIC and the Maine Compact on Immigration signatories oppose. Please vote against it.

Sincerely,



Beth Stickney, Esq.  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> Codified at 8 USC §1373.



## MAINE COMPACT *on* IMMIGRATION

The **Maine Compact on Immigration** is a bipartisan initiative by members of Maine's business community and higher education institutions to promote immigration policies that will strengthen our economy and communities, attract and retain global talent, and bring new entrepreneurs, businesses and workers to our nation and state. The Compact's principles reflect the signatories' vision of commonsense and future-focused federal immigration reforms that reaffirm the country's commitment to remaining a nation that welcomes immigrants, and that address the realities of our state's and nation's workforce needs and demographic challenges. These principles also affirm the signatories' support for state and local policies and practices that recognize the myriad economic contributions immigrants make as volunteers, consumers, students, workers, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and civically engaged citizens, strengthening Maine's communities and economy.

We urge Maine's congressional delegation and state leaders to adopt the principles of the Maine Compact on Immigration to guide the immigration discussion in our state. Furthermore, we encourage state and local leaders to follow suit with policies, practices and programs that create welcoming communities in Maine.

### **Maine Compact on Immigration Principles:**

- 1. FEDERAL SOLUTIONS:** Immigration policy is a federal issue with profound impact on states and the economy. We urge Maine's congressional delegation to lead aggressive efforts to enact immigration reforms that update and vastly improve our nation's outdated immigration system, protect our borders while preserving due process and human rights, and facilitate trade. Maine will thrive with a federal immigration system that is flexible enough to address the needs of businesses, while protecting the interests of both foreign-born and native-born workers.
- 2. STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY & WORKFORCE:** For our state economy to grow and compete, Maine needs a robust workforce and policies that prioritize attracting and retaining global talent. This necessitates a federal immigration system that is both responsive to, and effective at, meeting the demands of Maine's economy and the sectors that drive growth in our state. We also call on state leaders to adopt policies and practices to help Maine become a destination of choice for immigrants to the U.S. and that provide an environment where immigrants can reach their full potential in our state.
- 3. FAMILY:** Strong families are critical to developing successful individuals and cohesive communities. Federal immigration policies should prioritize keeping families together in order to ensure the most supportive home environments for all children in our country and across our state.
- 4. A COMMONSENSE APPROACH:** Immigrants have always been, and remain, an important part of our communities. We must adopt a commonsense approach to immigration that reflects our long-established values and recognizes the critical role that immigration has played in the history, culture, and economy of both our state and the nation. Federal immigration policies must provide

sensible and fair paths forward for immigrants wishing to come to the U.S. to find opportunity and to work, to join their immediate families, and to seek refuge from persecution. Our immigration laws must also include a path towards citizenship for those already here who lack legal status and who are of good character, pay taxes, and are committed to becoming fully participating members of our society and culture.

- 5. EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT:** We support a federal immigration enforcement strategy that emphasizes public safety, targets serious crime, safeguards witnesses and victims, keeps families together whenever possible, and considers the interests of and unintended consequences to businesses, the workforce, and communities. Local law enforcement resources should focus on criminal activities, not on civil violations of federal code.
  
- 6. STRONG COMMUNITIES:** Communities that grow and attract talent are the ones that are welcoming to all. We support state and local policies, practices and programs that provide a welcoming environment for immigrants and offer all residents the tools and opportunities they need to succeed.

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**Signatories**

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Adele Masengo Designs	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences	Eastern Maine Development Corporation
American Roots	Bowdoin College	Educate Maine
Androscoggin Bank	C. Love Cookie Project/ C. Love Baking School	Fisherman's Net
Associated General Contractors of Maine	Cabot7	Focus Maine
Austin Street Brewery	Cambium	Fogtown Brewing Co.
Axiom	Catama Productions	Geiger
Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce	Central Maine Power	Goodwill Industries of Northern New England
Bangor Savings Bank	Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI)	Gorham Savings Bank
Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce	Coffee by Design	Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center
Bates College	Colby College	GWI (Great Works Internet)
Bernstein Shur	Common Census	Hancock Lumber
BerryDunn	Community Concepts Finance Corporation	Hospitality Maine
Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Dead River	Hussey Seating

<b>IntWork, LLC</b>	<b>MaineHealth</b>	<b>Sappi North America</b>
<b>Jasper Wyman &amp; Sons</b>	<b>Mandy Levine Consulting, LLC</b>	<b>Sebasco Harbor Resort</b>
<b>Lee Auto Malls</b>	<b>Manufacturers Association of Maine</b>	<b>Southern Midcoast Chamber of Commerce</b>
<b>Lee International</b>	<b>MEMIC</b>	<b>Spurwink</b>
<b>Lewiston-Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>Northern Light Health</b>	<b>St. Joseph's College</b>
<b>Live and Work in Maine</b>	<b>ON Semiconductor</b>	<b>St.Germain</b>
<b>Lucro Management</b>	<b>Orono Brewing</b>	<b>The Jackson Laboratory</b>
<b>Luke's Lobster</b>	<b>Pan Tim Wood Products</b>	<b>Thomas College</b>
<b>Maine Beer Company</b>	<b>Penobscot Community Health Care</b>	<b>Tilson</b>
<b>Maine Business Immigration Coalition (MeBIC)</b>	<b>Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>TRSS Wealth Management</b>
<b>Maine Center for Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Portland Yacht Services</b>	<b>Tyson / Barber Foods</b>
<b>Maine College of Art</b>	<b>Preti Flaherty</b>	<b>Union River Lobster Pot</b>
<b>Maine Community Action Partnership</b>	<b>ProSearch</b>	<b>University of New England</b>
<b>Maine Dairy Farmers Association</b>	<b>Rainbow Construction, Inc.</b>	<b>Unum Group</b>
<b>Maine Grocers &amp; Food Producers Association</b>	<b>Ready Seafood</b>	<b>Valico Group</b>
<b>Maine Health Care Association</b>	<b>Retail Association of Maine</b>	<b>Verrill Dana</b>
<b>Maine State Chamber of Commerce</b>	<b>Revision Energy</b>	<b>VETRO FiberMap</b>
<b>Maine Stream Finance</b>	<b>Rising Tide Brewing Co.</b>	<b>WEX</b>
<b>Maine Tourism Association</b>	<b>Rosemont Market &amp; Bakery</b>	<b>Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine</b>
	<b>RSC Consulting</b>	

Beth Stickney  
Maine Business Immigration Coalition

Please note that due to a conflict, I am unable to testify live, but please allow Julia Brown, who will be attending, to read my testimony to the Committee. Thank you.