



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 2167 - An Act to Develop Maine's Economy and Strengthen Its Workforce by Establishing an Office of New Americans

January 30, 2024

Sen. Nangle, Rep. Stover, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am testifying today neither for nor against LD 2167 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee who establish the position on bills of municipal interest.

With so many challenges touching every industry and market, local leaders support the ideas contained in LD 2167 but are also left wondering if creating a new agency within state government is the best approach to produce the desired results. Currently, communities are grappling with increased homelessness and substance abuse issues amid a housing crisis and unprecedented workforce shortages. The proposed new office would help to address some of these challenges, particularly relating to immigrants and their specific barriers, however, local leaders have not seen a marked improvement within their communities for issues such as homelessness and the opioid crisis with added interventions at the state level. Rather than creating a new agency, municipal officials would kindly suggest that providing better coordination between community organizations and local and state resources would be a more efficient use of funding.

Local leaders want to share their strong support for the part of the bill that would examine pathways for professional accreditation and licensure and other activities to promote the economic and civic integration of immigrants into Maine. Also, officials support collecting data on this issue since analyzing it would better assist all leaders making future policy decisions.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.



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