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

Greetings Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and members of the Committee on State and Local Government. I am Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. Today, I am sharing testimony in support of LD 2167.

LD 2167 will establish the Office of New Americans, among the responsibilities of this office they will be charged to "strengthen workforce opportunities." AARP ME supports policies that;

- Protect people from discrimination
- Expand employment opportunities and economic security
- Help vulnerable populations
- Increase job availability and quality
- Improve workforce development

Much of this will be addressed in LD 2167. As this committee considers this legislation, we offer that one of the more significant labor-force developments of the past quarter century has been the rising participation rate of older Americans. In face of the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen a reduction in the number of workers who are 50+. However, workers age 50 and older still made up over 33 percent of the total U.S. workforce age 16 and older in 2022. Older workers need access to high-quality job search services and job training, this includes New Americans.

We offer that this new Office of New Americans should ensure that the workforce development system is accessible to and meets the needs of a diverse population of older workers and job-seekers. We urge that this committee support LD 2167. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you should have questions, I can be reached at [bquinn@aarp.org](mailto:bquinn@aarp.org) or at 207-272-8563.



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