

Tom Van Buren  
Deer Isle  
LD 2167

To the Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Tom Van Buren, and I am writing on behalf of the Racial Justice Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine in support of LD 2167, a bill to create the Office of New Americans within the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. The Racial Justice Council advises the Episcopal Diocese of Maine on matters of racial justice across the state, and advocates for the fair treatment of persons of all races, faiths, and places of origin. We do so in honor of Christian creed to honor and respect the humanity of all persons, and in accord with the teaching of Jesus Christ that we honor all of our neighbors as ourselves. In keeping with this mission, we believe that Immigrants should be made welcome in Maine, so that they may contribute to both the economic wellbeing of our state and to a dynamic cultural diversity in our communities. When we honor and respect all persons, we make our society better for all. LD 2167 would take an essential step of promoting active engagement of the Maine state government in the positive development of a more diverse workforce and the promotion of constructive integration of newer Americans into our communities through education, English language learning, workforce development, housing and healthcare. With this bill, Maine would join 19 forward looking states that actively engage in this effort through their Offices of New Americans. We urge all members of the Committee on State and Local Government to vote in favor of LD 2167.