



World Education Services Statement of Support for LD 2167

World Education services (WES) supports LD 2167, which promotes the economic inclusion of the more than 51,000 immigrants and refugees who live in Maine² by establishing an Office of New Americans (ONA) in the state.

WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For 50 years, WES has set the standard for international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change. Together with its partners, WES enables people to learn, work, and thrive in new places.

WES, together with American Immigration Council, convenes the ONA State Network. This network provides a forum for state policy leaders across the U.S. to drive transformative policies and programs to ensure immigrants and refugees are welcomed in their communities and have meaningful access to programs and services.

Immigrant and refugee workers are critical to Maine's economy, comprising 4.1% of the state's workforce.³ According to the Migration Policy Institute, 10,200 immigrants and refugees in Maine hold a bachelor's degree or higher, yet nearly one fifth of these workers are underemployed or unemployed.⁴ A state office tasked with promoting economic opportunity for immigrants and refugees is essential to addressing labor shortages and ensuring a more inclusive workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement of support.

² "Immigrants in Maine" American Immigration Council.

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/maine/#>

³ "Immigrants in Maine" American Immigration Council.

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/maine/#>

⁴ "State Workforce Data - US." migrationpolicy.org. Migration Policy Institute, November 1, 2021.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/workforce/US/ME/>.