

Pious Ali  
Portland  
LD 724

To: The Committee on State and Local Government<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>  
From: Pious Ali, City Councilor, Portland (Testifying in Personal Capacity)<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>  
Date: March 9, 2025<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>  
Subject: In Support of LD 724

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

I am deeply honored to submit this testimony in support of LD 724. While I serve as a City Councilor and the Mayor Pro Tem of Portland, I speak today not in my official capacity, but as a member of this community, as a neighbor, and as an advocate for inclusion and belonging. Maine is a place that prides itself on its diversity, on the richness of its many traditions, and on the fundamental belief that everyone should be seen, valued, and respected. Recognizing Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as public holidays is not just an acknowledgment of the Muslim community—it is a reaffirmation of the very values that make Maine home to so many.

Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan, is a day of joy and gratitude, a time when families and communities come together in celebration after a month of fasting, reflection, and spiritual renewal. Eid al-Adha, the "Festival of Sacrifice," is a reminder of faith, generosity, and the importance of giving to those in need. These are not just religious observances; they are moments of profound human connection, lessons in empathy and unity that resonate far beyond any single faith tradition.

As I speak to you today, I think of the countless Muslim children across our state who must choose between celebrating these sacred days with their families or attending school. I think of the parents who must decide whether to take unpaid leave to honor their faith. And I think of the broader community—our friends, neighbors, and colleagues—who may never have had the opportunity to experience the beauty of these celebrations simply because they are not recognized in the way other holidays are.

Maine's Constitution upholds freedom of religion and stands against discrimination based on faith. Yet, by not recognizing these holidays, we send an unintended message—that some traditions are more valued than others. That some families must make sacrifices that others do not. But Maine is better than that. We are a state that believes in fairness, in dignity, and in lifting each other up.

By adopting LD 724, you have the opportunity to take a meaningful step toward a more inclusive Maine. This is not just about a day off—it is about recognizing the full breadth of our community, about allowing families to honor their faith without compromise, and about ensuring that every child grows up knowing that their traditions are just as important as anyone else's.

Honorable members, I urge you to vote in favor of passing LD 724, establishing Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state public holidays. This decision would not only reflect the diversity of our state but would also reaffirm Maine's reputation as a place of coexistence, mutual respect, and shared humanity.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to making Maine a place where all feel welcome.

Respectfully submitted,<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>

Pious Ali<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>, City Councilor and Mayor Pro Temp, Portland (Testifying in Personal Capacity)<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>