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LD 724

My name is Ashley Bahlkow from 68 West Pownal Rd. North Yarmouth, ME.

I wholeheartedly encourage the committee and congress to pass LD 724 to recognize Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha as state holidays. As a friend and co-worker to several Muslims, I'm realizing how important and sensical this legislation is. This bill would create ease, joy and acknowledgment not only for the growing population of Muslim Mainers, but everyone.

Logistically, it would be incredibly helpful so Muslim students and workers don't have to choose between observing these important holidays and missing school or work, which in turn supports educators and employers. Passing this would mean fewer school absences for students, less time for teachers and professors helping students catch up, less stress for parents, and more family time. Additionally, it offers important recognition of our Muslim friends and neighbors and the opportunity to learn and teach about this holiday so many in our state observe.

Even if you aren't concerned with fairness, logistics, or supporting teachers, parents and employers; I imagine passing this bill is economically beneficial in that, similarly to the Christmas holidays, it would likely make for more time shopping for gifts, clothing and food, thus patronizing local businesses and boosting the economy around this time.

This is a total win-win for everyone and I caution any use of this bill to exacerbate divisive political rhetoric that turns us against our neighbors and fellow Mainers. Let's support each other.

Thank you kindly for your consideration of my words and others.