

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and esteemed members of the state and local government,

My name is Mohamed, and I am here to testify as a **community member, as a Muslim, and as someone who grew up in Maine**. Maine has always been a place that values community, respect, and inclusion. It has been a leader in many ways, from supporting diverse communities to ensuring that people of all backgrounds feel welcome.

Eid has always been one of the most beautiful and cherished times of the year for me and my family. It is a time of prayer, reflection, and gathering a moment when we come together with loved ones and our community to celebrate faith, gratitude, and generosity. As a child, Eid was filled with joy and tradition. But as I got older, I faced a difficult reality: having to choose between observing this important religious holiday and meeting school or work obligations. Each year, I had to either use my personal time, vacation days, or miss out entirely on a celebration that holds deep spiritual and cultural significance.

With **Maine's Muslim population steadily increasing** and more families making this state their permanent home, it is essential that our policies reflect the growing diversity of our communities. Recognizing Eid as a state holiday would not only ease this burden but also affirm Maine's commitment to being a leader in diversity, religious freedom, and inclusion. It would send a powerful message that all communities, including the growing Muslim population, are seen, valued, and respected.

Maine has always been at the forefront of doing what is right for its people. Making Eid a recognized state holiday is another step in ensuring that everyone, regardless of their faith, can fully participate in the traditions that matter most to them—without compromise. I urge you to support this effort and continue Maine's tradition of leadership in fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.