



TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.
LD 1411 – Ought to Pass

An Act to Modify the Laws Regarding Driver's License Applications

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am a policy director at the ACLU of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions. On behalf of our members, we urge you to support LD 1411.

The ACLU of Maine prioritizes criminal legal reform, seeking to end criminal law policies that disproportionately affect poor people and people of color. All Maine people deserve to have safe and healthy communities and to participate in those communities. LD 1411 will help accomplish this goal.

LD 1411 decriminalizes the penalties for failure to obtain a license within 90 days of becoming a resident of Maine when operating on a public way or parking area. By removing the Class E misdemeanor associated with this infraction and replacing it with a civil penalty of a fine up to \$500, this legislation wisely moves away from a criminal-level enforcement scheme for a traffic violation.

According to the Maine Statistical Analysis Center, 34,940 of the 70,317 charged cases in 2023 were Class E misdemeanors—half of the charged cases.¹ Removing this set of traffic violations from the criminal legal system will help to alleviate the backlog of criminal cases in Maine.

We urge you to support LD 1411.

¹ Maine Statistical Analysis Center, *Prosecutorial Data Dashboard*, available at <https://mainesac.org/prosecutorial-data-dashboard/>.