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**MEJ Testimony in *opposition* to LD 1329, An Act to Identify United States Citizenship Status on Driver's Licenses and Nondriver Identification Cards**

April 28, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Dina Malual and I am a Policy Advocate with Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. Today we are testifying in opposition to LD 1329.

LD 1329 requires driver's licenses to indicate whether a driver is a U.S. citizen, noncitizen or an asylum seeker, which is not the purpose of said document. A driver's license is an official document that authorizes a person to operate a vehicle on public roads.

The marking of immigration status on driver's licenses is unnecessary and increases the risks of profiling, discrimination and overall fear among Maine's immigrant population. When obtaining a driver's license, an applicant must show proof of residency and citizenship or legal presence in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Asylum seekers are legally present in the U.S. for the purposes of obtaining a driver's license in Maine. The agencies that are required to note immigration status are already aware of its noncitizen applicants, meaning immigrant drivers in Maine have provided necessary documents verifying their lawful presence. LD 1329 does not provide important or new information.

Simply knowing the status of a person does nothing but subject them to profiling. At almost every point in an immigrant's life in Maine, they are perceived differently. We already know that Black and Brown people are subject to higher traffic stops and this bill will increase racial disparities by opening immigrants up to an additional layer of judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/driver-licenses-and-ids/car-license/how-to-obtain-a-license>

Considering there are many paths to immigration relief, we do not believe asylum seekers should be singled out. Furthermore, immigration status can change and this bill does not appropriately account for immigrants outside of the single status previously named.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose LD 1329. Thank you for your consideration.