

For Immediate Release

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Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition issues statement on LD 1833: "An Act to Facilitate Compliance with Federal Immigration Law by State and Local Government Entities"

AUGUSTA, MAINE-- On Thursday, March 12, 2018, Mufalo Chitam, Executive Director of the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC) issues the following statement:

"I stand here to testify on behalf of the board and members of the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition. My daughter Grace is home on spring break and it is a privilege and heartbreaking at the same time to have her here in this room today to witness the work her mum has been so passionate about for most of her young life. 18 years ago I met a young man in my African country of Zambia who was on vacation just a couple months before my husband and my then 2-year-old daughter, and I were about to immigrate to America. His simple words to me were *"Please come to Portland Maine, it is very safe place to raise your family and even though they are very few immigrants the Mainers are very nice and welcoming."*

Clearly today we are witnessing a bill that will change this narrative and it is heartbreaking to have my daughter here witness a bill that will change how she feels about Maine, the only place she has called home.

Immigrants from many countries, ethnicities, religions make up the vibrant fabric of the United States. MIRC continues to advocate for a robust immigration system and a welcoming atmosphere for immigrants who make our country - and especially Maine - their home."

But this bill capitalizes on anti-immigrant fervor and makes immigrants feel less welcome in Maine. **Legislators should vote NO on LD 1833.**

LD1833 BILL

- This bill tells towns that their police officers must also act as immigration agents, and punishes towns that don't comply.
- This bill amounts to racial profiling by singling out people perceived to be "foreign" for different treatment.
- We are all safer when there is trust between communities and law enforcement. This bill will undermine that trust by making immigrant communities fear the police.
- Detaining someone without probable cause is unconstitutional. State lawmakers aren't going to change that legal fact.
- Police officers are not trained as immigration agents and can't be expected to interpret very complicated immigration laws.
- Local governments should not be forced to choose between their budgets and the Constitutional rights of their residents.

MIRC VALUES

- Communication: MIRC values the voice that the coalition gives to the immigrant community. As a community we will be successful when immigrant voices statewide are fully represented and included at the table on issues that matter to immigrants and refugees.
- Collaboration: MIRC values collaboration and the shared sense of purpose. As a community we will be successful when we collaborate well to achieve policy objectives that improve the legal, social and economic conditions experienced by Maine's immigrants – enhancing their lives and strengthening Maine."

MIRC MISSION

The Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC) strives to improve the legal, social and economic conditions experienced by Maine's immigrants – enhancing their lives while strengthening Maine – through advocacy, information sharing and collaboration both through and among our member organizations.

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Enhancing Lives and Strengthening Maine Immigrants!