



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

April 14, 2021

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has advocated for public policy which increases the health, wellness, safety, and economic security of Maine women and girls, with a focus on the most marginalized populations and communities.

We are here **in support of LD 1034, "An Act To Provide Funding To Support the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations."** We thank Representative Talbot Ross for sponsoring this important bill.

Our organization prioritizes gender-equitable public policy, and we know that gender equity is inextricably linked to racial equity. Black, brown, Indigenous, or any other women of color experience more harmful outcomes from a range of public policies than white women. Just one example, from our [2020 Roadmap for Women's Economic Justice](#), shows that Black women in Maine make on average .66 cents for every dollar a white man makes (while white women make .83 cents)<sup>1</sup>, and Black women in Maine are the least likely subpopulation to live with economic security<sup>2</sup> (the ability to meet their economic needs). **Racism and sexism work together to create more barriers and produce more adverse outcomes among our neighbors and in our communities, which is why our organization prioritizes racial equity in our work.**

The Permanent Commission on Racial, Indigenous, and Maine Tribal Populations is charged with examining racial disparities and to improve opportunities and outcomes for historically disadvantaged populations in Maine. However, without essential backbone staffing, the Commission does not have the capacity to carry out its charge. Instead, it relies on cobbling together time donations from members or their organizations and one-time or limited funding sources. If we are serious about the Permanent Commission's goals, we need to invest in its ability to meet those goals. It's time to ensure that our state has the resources to build a better future for every Mainer. **Please vote 'yes' on LD 1034.**

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director  
Maine Women's Lobby / mainewomen.org

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<sup>1</sup> Lifetime Wage Gap Losses for Black Women Overall State Rankings: 2019. (2020, March). Retrieved from <https://nwlc-ciw49txgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Black-Women-Overall-Lifetime-Losses-2020.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) and the Center for Social Development at Washington University. (2019). Accessed through the Institute for Women and Policy Research. Retrieved from [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org).