

# STATE OF MAINE

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In Senate \_\_\_\_\_

**Whereas**, the greatness of the United States and the State of Maine is a result of the contributions and sacrifices of diverse populations; and

**Whereas**, Maine benefits from the multiplicity of faiths and ethnicities of people that choose to live in this great State; and

**Whereas**, the members of the Maine Senate support and honor First Amendment constitutional protections of free speech, yet affirm that we cannot tolerate acts and expressions that disparage the religious or cultural beliefs and traditions of others, since such acts and expressions have been known historically to promote prejudice, incite fear and anger and interfere with constructive public discourse; and

**Whereas**, the members of the Maine Senate believe that religious and cultural divides can be bridged through tolerance, civility and a respectful exchange of dialogue; and

**Whereas**, the members of the Maine Senate engage in interfaith dialogue that focuses on what religions have in common and serves to strengthen relations between cultures and civilizations and avoids the creation of artificial ethnic, cultural or religious identities or barriers within and between societies; and

**Whereas**, the members of the Maine Senate recognize their collective obligation to defend and promote the rights and dignity of persons belonging to diverse ethnic, cultural, racial and religious minorities in order to create a society in which every individual enjoys equal civil, political, economic and social rights; and

**Whereas**, it is the expectation of the public that elected officials conduct themselves with civility and respect towards others, shunning bias and bigotry and racism; now, therefore, be it

**ORDERED**, that, We, the members of the 127th Maine Senate, now assembled in the First Regular Session, for ourselves and on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to peaceful coexistence and cooperation among individuals and people and to respect for their diversity, beliefs, culture and language; and be it further

**ORDERED**, that the Senate directs the Senate Rules Committee, in consultation with Senate leadership, to organize and present a session for members of the Maine Senate, to take place at such time as the President may direct, for the purpose of education and dialogue on the importance of respect for diversity and multiculturalism in our society.

**SPONSORED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Senator MASON)

COUNTY: Androscoggin