

Maine Racial Justice Policy Guide



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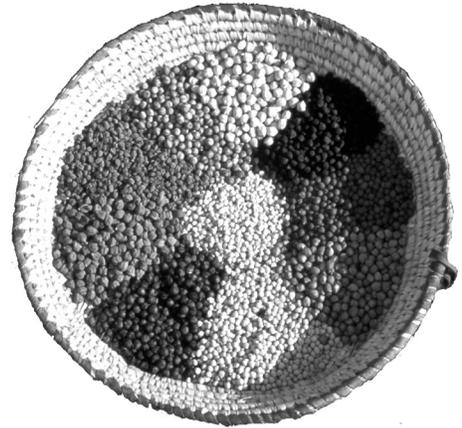
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Transforming Policy Toward Racial Equity



Executive Summary

If the state of Maine is to move forward with achieving opportunity, unity and prosperity for all of its people, greater attention to racial equity and inclusion must be a keystone of policy making. Rather than allowing patterns of inequality and exclusion to persist, Maine has much to gain by recognizing that the lives and fates of all of our residents are fully intertwined. All Mainers have a mutual stake in making all individuals and racial groups as full and equal participants in building a strong and vibrant economic, political and cultural future.

The Maine Constitution states: “All people are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness”(Article 1, Section 1). If we are to live up to this principle of equal and unalienable rights, we must ensure that all people are afforded full and fair opportunities to succeed. This does not happen by chance. It requires conscious attention and action when considering policy options and making budgetary decisions.

People of color in Maine suffer systemic racial injustice. Across a wide range of institutions and

systems, from education to the workplace to the criminal justice system, Mainers of color are much less likely to have the same opportunities as their white counterparts. The existence and persistence of racial inequities denies families their basic human rights and human needs.

Policy makers and the general public in Maine - regardless of party - must face these facts squarely.

These deep and persistent racial disparities are generally created without intent or malice. Rather than seeking to blame individuals for causing the problems, we should encourage everyone to take responsibility for creating solutions - and hold each other accountable for the outcomes. Racial inequality is pervasive, but it does not have to be permanent. Prior to voting on new policies, we can thoughtfully consider racial outcomes, and modify in order to avoid unintended consequences. Preventative strategies and proactive solutions exist, several of which are addressed in this report.

We believe all of have much to gain when we make principled choices based on full inclusion and equity. To this end, the report details these racial disparities and outlines both the positive and negative racial impacts of policy proposals to be debated in the 125th Legislature.

Key Findings:

- ***Every single county in Maine saw a double-digit percentage growth of the number of people of color between 2000 and 2010.*** The lowest rate of growth was in Sagadahoc County, where the number of people of color still increased by 23%. Overall, Maine's communities of color grew by 80%. Remarkably, three counties - Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Oxford - saw increases of 99% or higher.
- ***Maine - like the rest of the country - has enormous disparities in educational outcomes.*** Because of inequities in our schools, black fourth graders in Maine have below-basic math skills at nearly three times the rate of white children, and more than half of black fourth graders (58%) in Maine can't read at a basic level.
- ***Native Americans and Latinos in Maine die on average fourteen years earlier than Mainers as a whole.***
- ***The median annual income for every racial group in Maine—including Asians—is at least \$10,000 lower than the income for white Mainers.*** Usually, national data aggregates extremely high-earning Asians together with extremely lower-earning Asians and in the result is a finding of median incomes comparable to whites. Not so here. Additionally, multiracial Mainers had the lowest median income reported - just \$11,902.
- ***Maine counties with higher numbers of people of color tend to have lower median ages - a key indicator for future economic well-being.*** Everyone interested in making sure there are more young people in Maine should therefore care about racial equity.



Introduction

Discussing race can be difficult. While we don't claim to have any magic ways to make these conversations easier, we do believe that clarity about terms and intent immeasurably helps the process. That's why in this introduction we focus on: (1) what racial justice is (2) why it's important to discuss it explicitly and (3) disclaimers about the inherent limitations of the data we have and the language we use. None of the concepts herein are perfect, but we do think they are the best of what exists to date.

What is Racial Justice?¹

Racial Justice is fair treatment, equal opportunity, full inclusion and equitable outcomes across all communities. Racial justice addresses the cumulative effects of past and present inequities to eliminate disparities and produce fair outcomes for everyone. Justice implies "equity," meaning fairness. This is distinct from "diversity" which means variety. Racial equity is also distinct from civil rights. Civil rights refer to the rights provided by a government entity. Racial equity more broadly addresses an array of economic, political and cultural factors, with a focus on fair impacts and outcomes for all individuals and communities.

Although some want to believe that America has become a "post-racial" society - especially with the election of President Obama - widespread racial inequities persist. Ignoring the very real racial disparities between people and communities suppresses the demand to find real solutions. Many believe that racism must be intentional; if an individual or an institution didn't intend to be racist, then it can't be racism. Instead, we believe racism often has little to do with intentions and much more to do with impacts. Racial justice will be achieved not when everyone has better feelings towards people of color - although that would be nice. Rather, racial justice will be achieved when we eliminate the specific disparities and inequities like those we enumerate in this report.

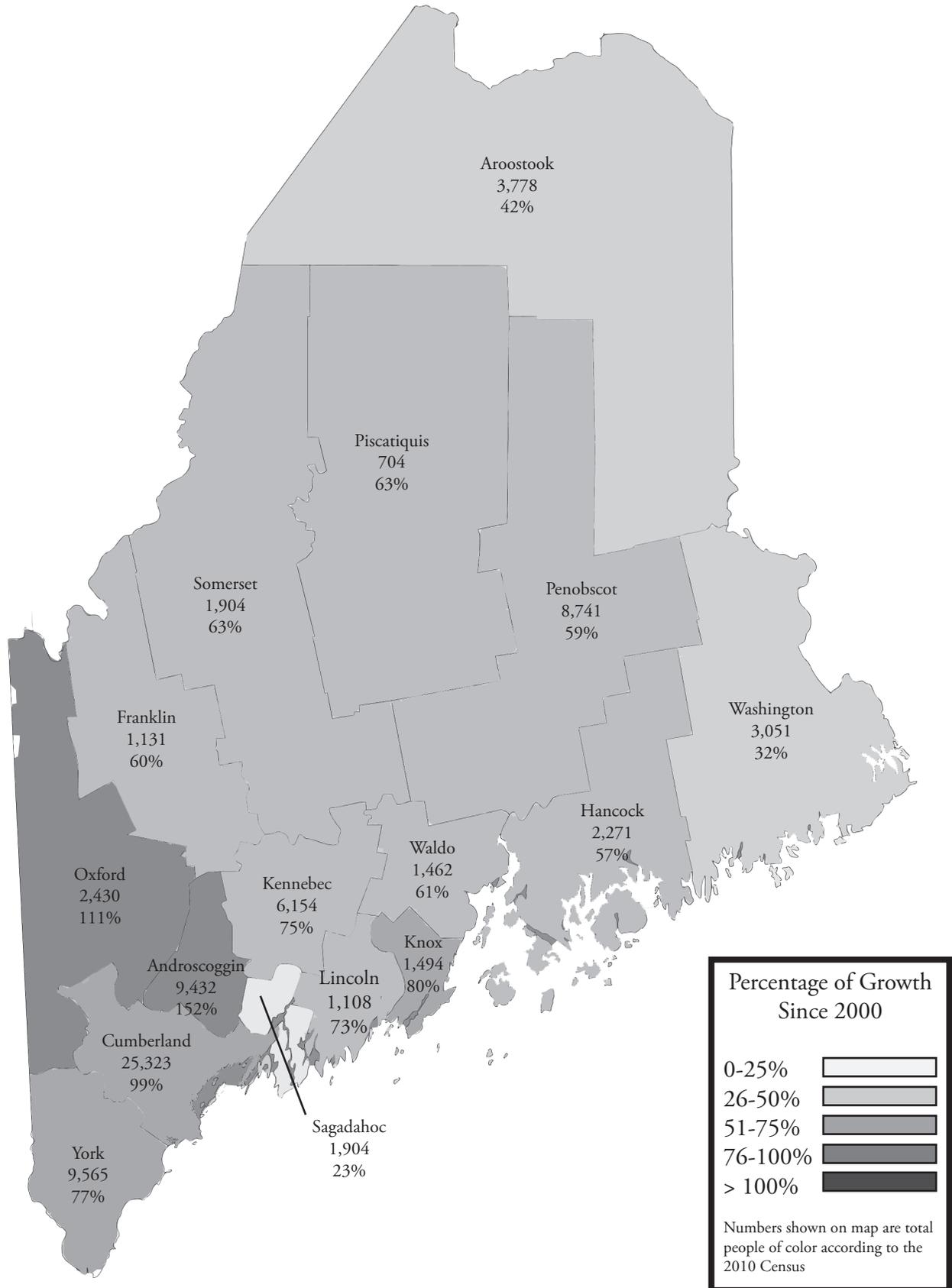
Why is Racial Justice Important to Maine?

Many people think that because Maine has relatively few people of color compared to other states we don't need to discuss racism and racial justice. The need to address the injustices people of color suffer in Maine is not the only reason elected officials should pay close attention to these communities; their growing populations will mark a historic shift in the demographic make-up of Maine and the nature and future of Maine's economy.

Every single county in Maine saw a double-digit percentage growth in the number of people of color between 2000 and 2010. The lowest rate of growth was in Sagadahoc County, where the number of people of color still increased by 23%. Overall, Maine's communities of color grew by 80%. Remarkably, three counties - Cumberland, Androscoggin, and Oxford - all saw increases of 99% or higher. The 2010 Census estimates over 72,000 people of color living in Maine, and this increase should certainly be considered one of the most significant demographic developments occurring in our state today.

¹This framework was developed by the Applied Research Center. Please see their website for more information, as well as a list of similar state-by-state policy guides and scorecards on racial equity: <http://www.arc.org/content/blogcategory/59/163/>.

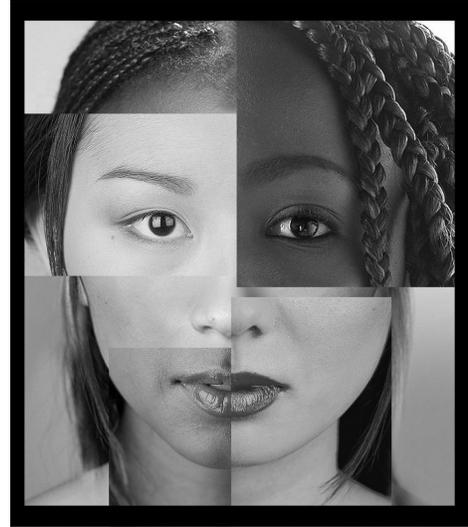
Table 1: Percentage Growth by County of People of Color from 2000 to 2010



Demographics are not the only reason why the public and policy makers ought to pay attention to Maine's growing communities of color. This report reveals the growing evidence that people of color in Maine suffer systemic racial injustice. When it comes to education, health and jobs, it is clear that people of color in Maine are unlikely to have the same opportunities as white people. Thus, race indisputably and significantly impacts quality of life in Maine. We believe all policy makers and people of Maine—regardless of their party—must face this fact squarely and work together to right this wrong.

Finally, we believe the issues facing people of color in Maine deserve thoughtful attention, because it is difficult to imagine our economic future without these emerging communities. In the final section of this report, we detail the looming crisis Maine is facing: an aging population without a workforce young enough to fill vacated jobs—or to fill new jobs created by increased service demands—or large enough to provide a tax base to cover the cost of the increased demand on elder services. Retaining young people who were born here won't be enough. The only way to fully address the issue is to encourage new and younger people to come to Maine, and people of color are predominantly the immigrants able to do exactly that. We show that the places in Maine that have most successfully minimized their increase in median age have been those counties that attract the most people of color. Our shared economic future depends on continuing to make Maine an equitable, multi-racial state.

In the sections below, we focus this analysis of racial justice on issue areas where we have good reason to believe racial disparities exist and where state level policy makers will have clear choices to make this year about policies that will negatively or positively impact those disparities. We hope that this publication will help provide necessary information and a conceptual framework for the discussion of these policies. By no means is this report intended to be an exhaustive compilation of the issues that have a racial impact. Rather, it should be seen as a summary of the areas where we have research that suggests racial inequity, areas where there are clear policy choices this legislative session, and areas where there exists consensus among our partner organizations that conscious consideration of racial impacts can be prudently applied.



Why Focus Explicitly On Race?

While other categories of difference - class, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, etc., provide valuable insights into social forms of inequity, we believe race deserves discussion of its own. This is not to say discussion of race should preclude conversations of these other important differences. But race cannot be subsumed into any of these other categories.

For example, many people often believe that “it's class, not race” at the root of inequities, suggesting that if we just ignored race and established economic justice, racial injustice would disappear. We think this is short sighted for several reasons:

- ***Historically, reforms for economic justice have excluded people of color—often deliberately.*** As we explain in the income and employment section of this report, many of the New Deal reforms for wage standards, workplace safety standards, and other forms of worker protections did not apply to agricultural and domestic workers—sectors occupied predominantly by people of color. In more recent years, we witnessed the passage of sweeping health care reform legislation that actually made it illegal for undocumented immigrants—mostly people of color—to purchase health insurance, even with their own money.
- ***Well-intended, race-silent policies, with little or***

no regard to race at the time they are developed and enacted, often have unintended negative consequences for people of color. California's experience with its Class-size Reduction (CSR) Initiative is a good example of the kinds of unintended consequences that can emerge without a rigorous analysis of racial impact:

- A measure designed to boost the educational achievement of all students had the immediate effect of actually increasing educational disparities in some districts with the highest concentration of low-income people of color.
- With one of the highest student-to-teacher ratios in the country, the California legislature decided to annually invest \$1.6 billion to fund a one-third reduction in class size for kindergarten through third grade in every public school in the state.
- This created an immediate need for thousands of new teachers. Schools with ample size and resources, often in wealthy and white suburban communities, were able to quickly hire available qualified teachers and many of these new hires came from urban, economically-disadvantaged schools composed primarily of people of color. Urban schools, without the available space and resources to accommodate new classrooms and teachers, suddenly faced a critical teacher shortage and were forced to

fill these vacancies with largely unqualified “emergency credentialed” staff who lacked teaching experience.

- “On the whole, CSR increased the number of inexperienced, uncertified teachers in the most at-risk schools as more senior teachers left to fill new openings in more affluent schools. This problem appears to have been much more severe in L.A.’s high poverty schools than in similar schools in other districts,” said Christopher Jepsen of the Public Policy Institute of California (Jepsen & Rivkin, 2002).
- Students in suburban schools benefited from smaller class sizes, while urban students of color were actually adversely impacted due to the increase in under qualified teachers in their schools. With a racial equity analysis, the program could have been phased in, rather than implemented on a mass scale, with disadvantaged schools given first preference to funds for hiring new teachers. The result might have been much more significant educational quality and equity. Please see the Applied Research Center’s Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit for more information on the kind of analysis policy makers can do to avoid these situations:

<http://www.arc.org/content/view/744/167/>



Disclaimers

Limits of representation. While we have attempted to use the most appropriate terminology for all our concepts, we recognize that there are no universally accepted terms for many racial groups, and even racial categories themselves can be disputed. We have done our best to develop this report in collaboration with the communities that these terms represent, and have done our best to consult organizations from those communities on their preferences. For example, “Latino” and “Hispanic” have often been used interchangeably, but many have strong preferences for one over the other. We have tried to be consistent in our terminology, but understand that every representation is, in the end, a misrepresentation. We hope that our commitment to using terms that stay faithful to our allies in those communities compensates for any issue that might be taken with these word choices.

Limits of data. Because of the small population sizes of Maine’s communities of color, as well as the relatively short amount of time many researchers have had to begin studying these communities, there are many instances where reliable data is not available for important issues. In other cases, data may be available for some communities of color and not for others, or the margin of error might be relatively higher than in comparable studies in other states. This Guide pulls together the best research available, makes clear what we believe it suggests, and openly disclose its limitations. But if one thing is clear, it is that we need to do much better in Maine deliberately and systematically researching race.

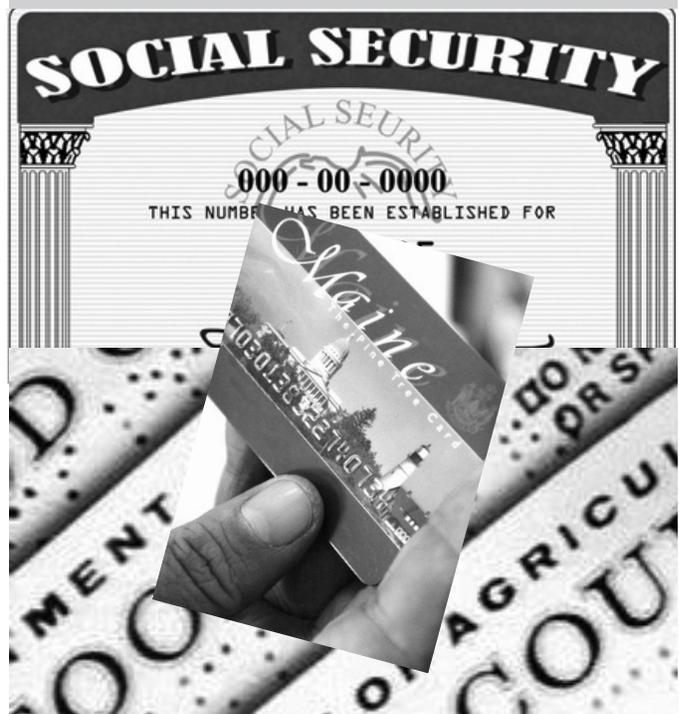
Example of a Policy Having a Negative Racial Impact:



In 2008, under pressure from the Department of Homeland Security, the Maine Legislature attached a legal status requirement to the obtainment of a driver's license. As a result, every Mainer now needs to prove their legal presence in the state. For natural born citizens, this means producing a document like a birth certificate. For immigrants, it means producing paperwork like visas. The legal status requirement has been a burden on multiple fronts to a variety of Maine residents and institutions. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles must now familiarize itself with the byzantine complexity of the dozens of different visas and similar documentation immigrants present. People who have lived in Maine their entire lives have been frustrated that their inability to produce a birth certificate means they cannot drive. Undocumented immigrants have been forced further into the shadows. Consequently, it has actually become more difficult for law enforcement officials to do its job because they can no longer rely on driver's license databases in investigations involving undocumented immigrants. This is a prime example of how policies that primarily target communities of color can have secondary negative impacts on other populations and society as a whole.

Example of a Policy Having a Positive Racial Impact:

In the mid-1990s, the federal government arbitrarily barred documented immigrants from receiving TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and SSI in the first five years of their residence in the U.S. In a show of strong bi-partisan unity Maine legislators acted swiftly to make sure that Maine immigrants subject to the 5-year bars did not fall through the cracks. As a result, many families of color have been able to get on their feet more quickly by accessing the services they need in a timely way. This has saved taxpayer resources in the long run by ensuring that short-term challenges don't turn into bigger, long-term problems. For example, families have been able to get temporary assistance with rent while they establish steady employment so as to avoid homelessness and the long-term, negative consequences that come with it, particularly for children. Below, we discuss further the short-sightedness of the current legislature's decision to contemplate removing these common-sense policies.





Race and Education

The Issues:

As a whole, we know that black children in Maine are less likely to be proficient at reading and mathematics than their white peers, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.²

- **Black fourth graders have below-basic³ math skills at nearly three times the rate of white children.** This means 31% of black fourth graders are at a below-basic level, compared to 12% of white fourth graders at a basic level.

Table 2: 4th Grade Math Scores by Race in Maine

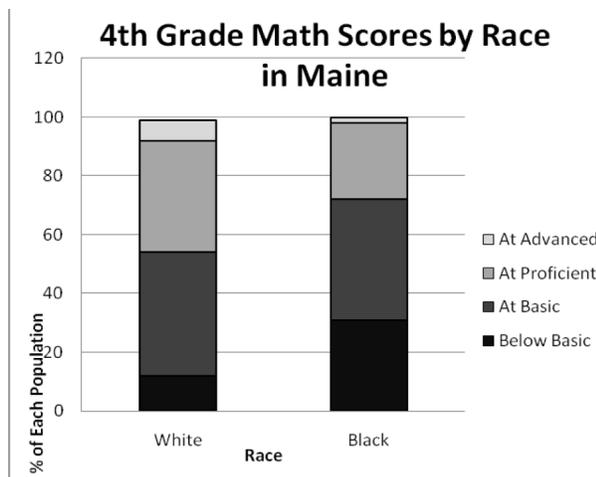
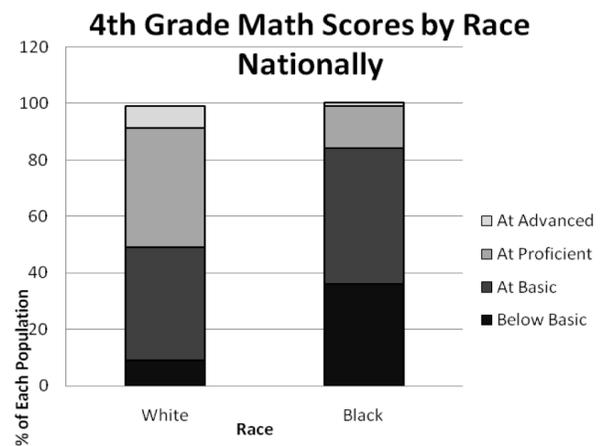


Table 3: 4th Grade Math Scores by Race Nationally



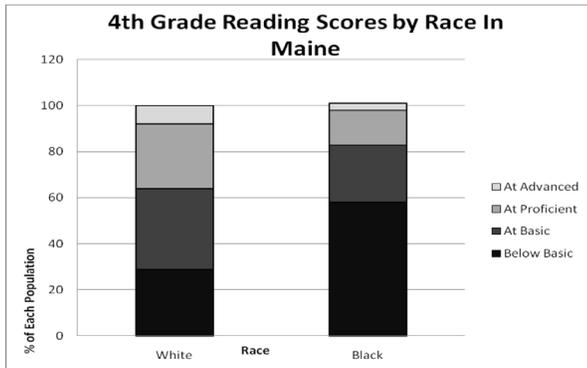
More than half of black fourth graders (58%) in Maine can't read at a basic level. This is about twice the rate for white fourth graders (29%). While it is important to acknowledge a relatively high margin of error (7.5%) for the black population due to small sample size, the size of the disparity clearly exceeds the margin of error.

- **These “Below Basic” scores closely mirror national averages, suggesting that Maine is similar to the rest of the country in the need to confront racial disparities in education.** 36% of black fourth graders nationally scored below basic in math, which is within the 6.6% margin of error for black fourth graders reading in Maine. Nationally, 52%

of black fourth graders read at a below basic level; that is within the 7.5% margin of error for similar Maine students.

Policies that will have a Positive Racial Impact:

Table 4: 4th Grade Reading Scores by Race in Maine



According to a Study by the Maine Civil Liberties Union Foundation, schools at least in Portland show racial disparities with respect to discipline rates (Maine Civil Liberties Union Foundation).

- ***African-American students in Portland High Schools make up at least half- or sometimes more - of school suspensions, even though they account for only 23% of the total student population.*** This includes Portland, Deering, and Casco Bay High Schools.
- The disparity in insubordination rates are similar.
- Research on this topic has been limited to Portland because data is not reported or tracked uniformly on indicators such as student discipline and completion rates statewide, or even within Portland. We believe the research so far makes it clear that this is a problem that deserves a thoughtful policy response, as well as further investigation and data collection.

- ***LD 1503, "An Act to Promote School Attendance and Increase School Achievement."*** This bill implements the recommendations of a stakeholder group established by the Commissioner of Education. Among other things, the policy improves data collection, reduces the age by which a child must start school, establishes more effective ways to deal with truancy, discourages so-called "zero-tolerance" practices, and creates due process standards for school expulsion. School districts and students of color alike that have struggled with these issues and would benefit greatly from its passage.
- ***LR 1542, "An Act Regarding Certification of Reading Teachers."*** This legislative request will not turn into a bill this year, because more work must be done with the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education to craft the policy. The purpose of this effort is to improve the quality of higher education of all new teachers who are responsibility for teaching reading. English language learners of color stand to benefit enormously from this improved instruction.

²U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 4th Grade Math and Science Tests

³These are the definition of these terms from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Basic: Partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade. Proficient: Solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter. Advanced: Superior performance.

⁴Please see <http://www.readingmatterstomaine.org/> for more information.

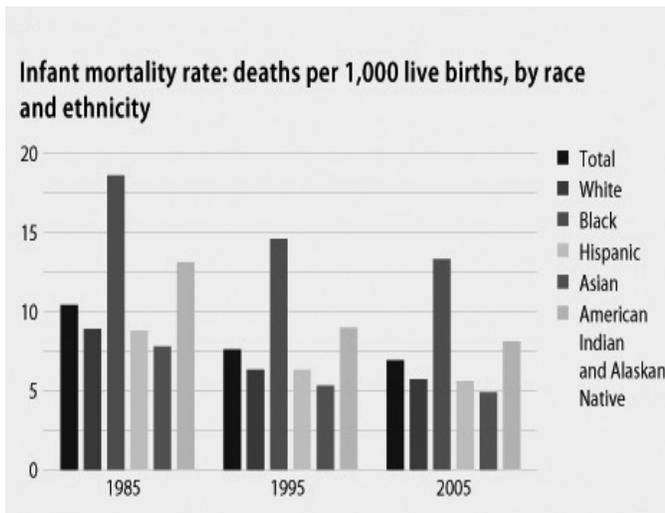
Race and Health

The Issues:

People of color experience significant health disparities nationwide. These disparities cannot be explained by genetics; they are caused by racially differentiated experiences in society. The 2010 Healthy Maine Report puts Maine’s situation in the national context (Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010). Here are a few important highlights:

- *African Americans have twice the infant mortality rates as whites, die 40% more often from heart disease, and 30% more often from cancer.* They have higher death rates from breast cancer, despite having similar rates of mammography.

Table 5: Infant Mortality Rates By Race and Ethnicity



- *Latinos die from diabetes at twice the rates as whites and suffer tuberculosis nearly twice as often.*
- *American Indians and Alaskan Natives also have nearly double the infant mortality rate and more than twice the rate of diabetes.* Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15-24 year-olds.
- *Asian and Pacific Islanders have higher rates of hepatitis and tuberculosis, with many disparities varying widely based on national origin.* For

example, cervical cancer rates in Vietnamese women are nearly five times the rates in whites.

In the limited research Maine has done important health disparities have surfaced that mirror national trends.

- *Native Americans and Latinos in Maine die on average fourteen years earlier than Mainers as a whole.* Between 1994-1998, the most recent years for which data is available, the mean age of death for all Mainers was 74.3 years. That compares to only 60.1 years for Maine Native Americans (Kuehnert, 2000, p. 11), and 60.4 years for Maine Latinos (Spicer & Kuehnert, 2002, p. 14). Significantly, while Mainers overall have trended towards longer life expectancies, no such trend exists for Latinos. Again, small sample sizes and the possibility of undercounting (particularly for undocumented Latinos) make accurate numbers a challenge here.
- *Native Americans in Maine may die from cancer, specifically lung cancer, more than Mainers overall.* For example, there are 18.2 more lung cancer deaths per 100,000 of the population of Native American Mainers than of Mainers overall (Kuehnert, Health Status and Needs Assessment of Native Americans in Maine: Final Report, 2000, p. 13).
- *Native Americans in Maine die from heart disease at higher rates than Mainers overall.* For a while, this data was skewed due to racial miscoding on death certificates. But new research confirms that the disparity persists (Kuehnert, Graber, & Corkum, 2003).

Toxic chemicals disproportionately negatively impact the health of people of color - particularly children - in the U.S. and Maine.

- *One very recent study demonstrated that Mexican-American children in California have polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE) in their bodies at seven times the rate of similar low-income children in Mexico (Brenda Eskenazi, 2011).* These chemicals have been linked to worse fine motor skills, attention disorders and fertility issues. Numerous other studies have shown that children are exposed to these chemicals mostly in their use as flame retardants. Because Latino children are more

likely to live in homes with poorly manufactured furniture, deteriorated PBDE-treated furniture foam, and poor ventilation, they are more likely to be exposed to these chemicals. Although no specific study of Mainers of color and consumer toxics has been conducted, it is reasonable to suppose that the similar income disparities of Latinos in Maine and California suggest similar exposures to the kinds of products that contain these consumer toxics. Similar data exists on the effects of Bisphenol-A for non-Hispanic Blacks (Calafat, Ye, Wong, Reidy, & Needham, 2008)



Policies that will have a Positive Racial Impact:

- **LD 1397: Single Payer Health Care** would close one of the most significant racial health disparities - access to insurance. Single payer also allows the public to hold our health care system more accountable to close other racial health disparities.
- **LD 412, Ban on Bisphenol-A.** Proposed by the Department of Environmental Protection, the bill passed unanimously in the Senate and all but three representatives in the House voted in favor. This will reduce health problems communities of color experience as a result of disproportionate exposure to toxic chemicals.
- **LD 1498, “An Act to Phase Out Dirigo** and Establish the Maine Health Benefit Exchange for Small Businesses and Individuals,” introduced by Rep. Treat. This bill would fully implement the federal Affordable Care Act and go a long way towards ensuring that Mainers of color can access the care they need.



Policies that will have a Negative Racial Impact:

- **Section KK of the Governor’s proposed state budget** would provide many documented immigrants could no longer receive MaineCare for the first five years they are in the U.S. This unfairly negatively impacts the health of a very specific population of color in Maine.
- **LDs 226, 473, 1162, 1200, 410, 1436, and 1333 all repeal important health insurance consumer protections**, either through allowing the purchase of insurance across state lines or through outright repeal of requirements like guaranteed issue and community rating. The regulations are what protect consumers from discrimination based on things like age, gender, income, and health. Because people of color tend to have more health challenges, they would be disproportionately negatively impacted by the repeal of these protections.
- **Any bill that weakens the Kids Safe Products Act.** LD 1129, for example, would limit the products to be considered and the age of children to be protected.
- **LD 281 would establish a five year statute of limitations for environmental violations from the date of discovery.** For an example of how this could negatively impact people of color, we need to look no further than the Holtrachem cleanup site in Orrington. The mercury from that site has contaminated the Penobscot River, home to Indian Island. In addition to the obvious negative health effects, this pollution inhibits traditional cultural practices. If there had been a five year statute of limitations for Holtrachem, there would not have been justice for residents along the Penobscot River.

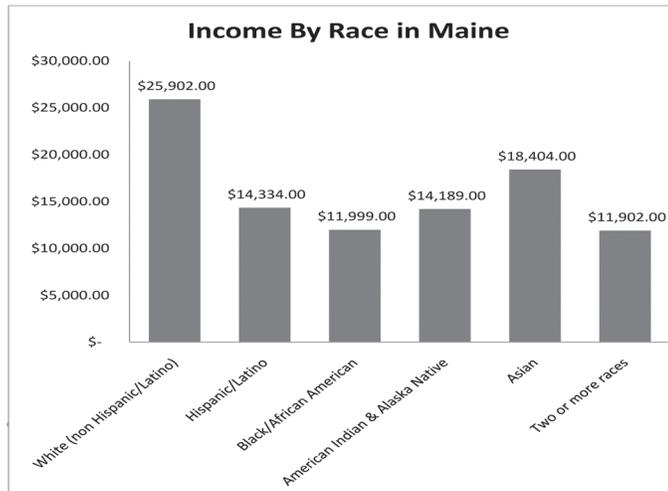
Race and Jobs

The Issues:

We know that people of color in Maine tend to earn dramatically less money and have a harder time finding a job than white Mainers:

- The average income for a white Mainer is about \$25,902. Median income for Asian workers is just 71% of the median income for white Mainers; just 55% for Latinos and American Indian and Alaskan Natives; and only 46% for Black/African Americans, as well as people of two or more races. While the small sample sizes allow for a relatively high margin of error - anywhere from 9-18%--these racial disparities of income far exceed that margin (American Community Survey, 2006-2008 Estimates).

Table 6: Income by Race in Maine



It is nearly two times higher for every other racial group in Maine. The poverty rate of black and Native Mainers is over three times that of white people.

- Specific studies of employment in Portland and Lewiston corroborate these findings of wage disparities. Recent refugee arrivals in Portland earn just about half of the “typical” Portland worker. (Maine Department of Labor, 2006). *In Lewiston, a study of Somali refugees found that the median average quarterly wage was just \$1,562.58: only \$6,250 per year.* (Maine Department of Labor, 2008, p. 11).

Table 7: Poverty Rates by Race and Hispanic or Latin Origins

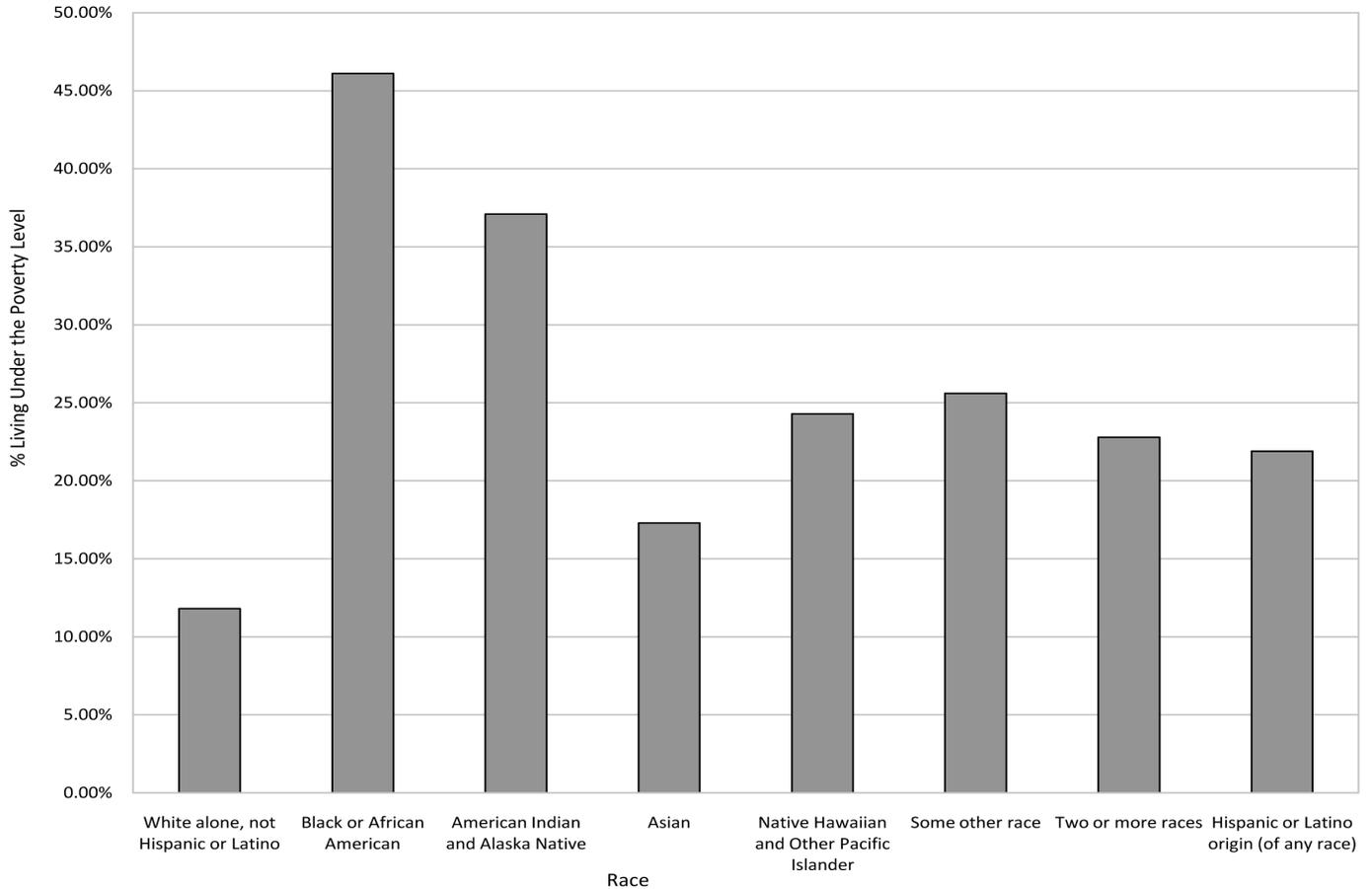
	Total	Below the Poverty Line	% Below the Poverty Line
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	1211359	142531	11.80%
Black or African American	14644	6758	46.10%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6168	2290	37.10%
Asian	11624	2006	17.30%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	239	58	24.30%
Some other race	4304	1100	25.60%
Two or more races	21545	4916	22.80%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	15751	3443	21.90%



Table 8: Maine Poverty Rate by Race

Maine Poverty Rate by Race

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey Estimates



A recent in-depth study of restaurant workers found further disparities along lines of race and immigration:

- White restaurant workers reported higher median hourly wages than workers of color - \$10.54 and \$9.91, respectively (Restaurant Opportunity Center of Maine, 2010, p. 21).
- Of immigrant workers surveyed (Restaurant Opportunity Center of Maine, 2010, p. 25):
 - 31.9% worked hours “off the clock” without receiving pay
 - 20.8% reported that management stole a portion of their tips
 - 4.9% experienced minimum wage violations - double the rate of U.S.-born workers
 - 17% reported missing guards on the cutting machines
 - 23.5% reported fire hazards in the restaurant - double the rate of U.S. born workers

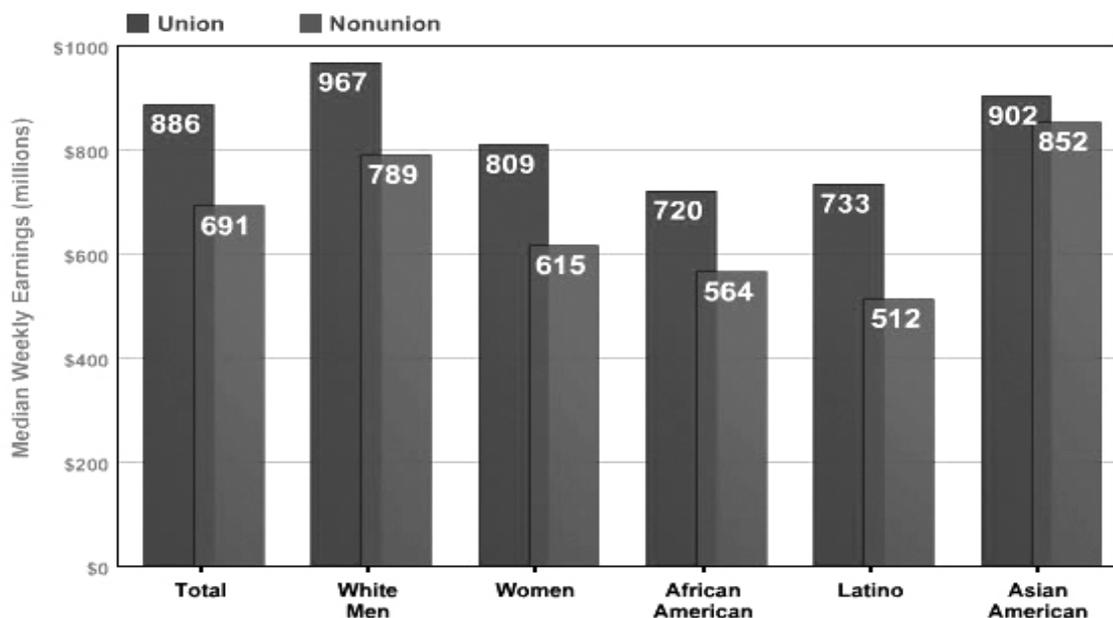
Policies that will have a Positive Racial Impact:

- **LD 1450, “An Act to Enforce Wage Laws,”** introduced by Rep. Diane Russell will ensure that people of color are adequately paid for their work. Race is one of the many things that employers can exploit to deny people their fair share of wages.
- **LD 1432, “An Act to Expand Apprenticeship Programs and Scholarship Programs with Funding from Identification of Economic Development Tax Incentives,”** introduced by Rep. Stuckey, will help unemployed workers get jobs by expanding apprenticeships and improving the program. Rep. Stuckey deserves special credit for the explicit emphasis provided in the legislation to eliminate barriers to education and training opportunities for “women, minorities, and people with low income.”
- **LD 1314, “An Act to Standardize the Definition of Independent Contractors,”** introduced by Rep. Thomas, will help prevent the exploitation of workers via misclassification, something to which immigrants and people of color are particularly prone.

Policies that will have a Negative Racial Impact:

- **LD 150, Drug testing for Medicaid recipients and LD 193, legal residency requirements and wait times for services:** these bills play to stereotypes of immigrants, people of color, and low-income people. In addition to the negative impacts on these populations, these bills would limit access to services for all Mainers—a majority of whom are white.
- **LD 1207, the elimination of state minimum wage, overtime, and collective bargaining rights for egg farm workers,** is targeted directly at the employees of DeCoster. Over 90% of those workers are Latinos.
- **LDs 309 and 788, so-called “Right to Work” legislation,** introduced by Representative Winsor, will make it more difficult for people of color (and all Mainers) to form unions—one of the best ways to close the racial wage gap.

Table 9: U.S. Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers, Union vs. Non-Union 2008



Race and Our Economic Future

The Issues:

Maine’s median age, 41.4, is the highest in the country. The Chamber of Commerce puts it this way: “Historically, population growth is correlated with economic growth....Natural increase in Maine (births over deaths) was 1,440 in 2001, 800 in 2009, and soon will be a negative number. *This makes in-migration a critical factor for renewing Maine’s population and labor force*” (Maine State Chamber of Commerce and Maine Development Foundation, 2010, p. 2; emphasis added).

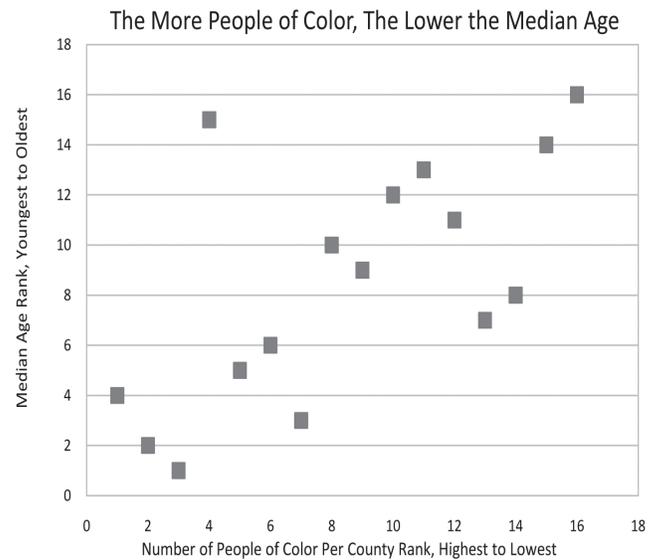
Table 10: Median Age and County Rank, People of Color

Area	Median Age	Rank, Median Age	Number of People of Color, 2010 Census	Rank, Number of People of Color
Androscoggin County	39.2	2	9432	2
Aroostook County	43.7	6	3778	6
Cumberland County	39.7	3	25323	1
Franklin County	40.4	4	1131	15
Hancock County	44.4	14	2271	8
Kennebec County	41.5	5	6154	5
Knox County	44.8	10	1494	12
Lincoln County	46.7	15	1108	14
Oxford County	43.3	8	2430	10
Penobscot County	39.1	1	8741	4
Piscataquis County	46.3	16	704	16
Sagadahoc County	41.2	9	1777	9
Somerset County	42.5	12	1904	11
Waldo County	42.	11	1462	13
Washington County	44.1	13	3051	7
York County		7	9565	3
Maine	41.		803 5	

The State Planning Office has noted that our high median age will cause many problems for economic development. Their report states that: “With an aging population, more people retire each year, making it harder for employers to find workers and fill jobs. An older population requires more health care services, increasing demand for nurses and physicians. Birth rates go down, meaning

fewer children to fill the schools.... Populations experiencing slow growth may find it more difficult to attract businesses. Companies looking to relocate or expand want to do so in places where the population is growing” (Maine State Planning Office, 2010, p. 4).

Table 11: Median Age vs. Number of People of Color by County



This will have a negative impact for government at all levels. The Immigration Policy Center describes the scenario this way: “In addition, retirees will transition from being net taxpayers to net recipients of health and pension benefits, and they will be supported by a smaller workforce that is struggling to meet its own needs” (Myers, Thinking Ahead about our Immigrant Future, 2008, pp. 8,9).

Table 12: Maine Native Born by Race

Maine Native Born Population by Race

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey Estimates

■ White ■ Non White

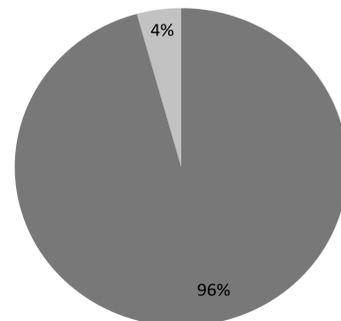
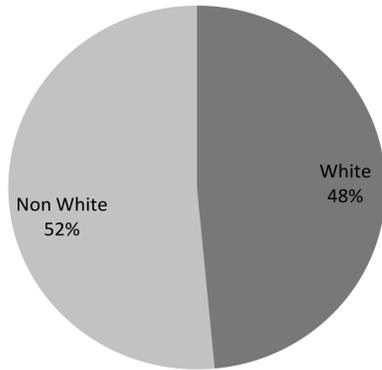


Table 13: Foreign Born Population by Race

Foreign Born, Not a U.S. Citizen Population by Race

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey Estimates



There is a direct connection between Maine being a white state and being an old state. Attracting immigrants, most of whom are people of color, is an essential ingredient in solving this problem. Thus, making Maine a welcoming, more diverse state is critical to our economic future. The more people of color Maine attracts, the younger the state will become, and the better able we will be to face tomorrow's economic challenges.

Policies that will have a Positive Racial Impact:

- **LD 998, “An Act to Create the Immigrant Business Development Loan Fund,”** introduced by Rep. Chipman. Immigrants of color tend to have a much higher rate of small business ownership, but they also face many challenges accessing credit. This bill would help address those barriers and ensure Maine’s newest entrepreneurs have the best possible chance at business success.
- **LD 1452, the creation of a public economic development bank,** introduced by Rep. Russell, would go further by providing an alternative to the often racially predatory practices of Wall Street banks. In 2010, Bank of America made zero loans to small businesses in Maine through its flagship 7(a) program. It is difficult to imagine that there was not a single credit-worthy small business in Maine that needed capital. A public economic development bank, would allow Maine to bring back into the state the nearly half a billion dollars currently invested in out-of-state banks. It would work with local banks and credit unions to get to scale on economic development and job creation in a way that did not depend on the financial institutions that preyed on people of color and wrecked the economy.

Policies that will have a Negative Racial Impact:

- **LD 1095, a bill to encourage the development of private prisons in Maine,** sets Maine on the opposite course of becoming a more welcoming state; it enables businesses to make a profit on incarceration, largely of people of color. In addition to people of color already being overrepresented in our prisons, most new private prisons actually specialize in immigrant detentions—the vast majority of immigrants are, of course, people of color.
- **LD 1496, a bill modeled after Arizona’s SB 1070,** introduced by Rep. Chase, requires Maine law enforcement to stop people who they have “reasonable suspicion” are undocumented. Among the outcomes of this legislation would be racial profiling and loss of trust between communities of color and the law enforcement officers meant to protect them.



Final Thoughts:

Our neighbor to the north, New Brunswick, has already adopted a set of deliberate policies to encourage exactly the migration (Turkel, 2010) we've discussed. Migrant workers, the vast majority of whom are immigrants and/or people of color, are the primary labor force for the most important sectors of the economy, namely in agriculture, forestry and tourism. Recent efforts to document the contributions of Latin American immigrants (Maine Center for Economic Policy, 2009) as well as Asian immigrants (Maine Center for Economic Policy, 2011) demonstrate the impact that these populations of color have had throughout the whole of the Maine economy. Other studies have shown that the absolute number of young people of color in the state is increasing, as is their overall proportion of the youth population (Noreus, Hubley, & Rocque, 2009, p. 1). We must remember that people of color aren't just new arrivals. People of color have proudly called Maine their home for generations—especially in Native and African American communities. For generations, they have contributed tremendously to this state.

A strong commitment to racial equity and inclusion will benefit the entire state of Maine. Racial disparities are prevalent, but they need not be permanent. There are many viable equitable proposals that are already being considered by the state legislature. There are also many good models that have already been enacted in other states. If we do nothing to address racial disparities as Maine's demographics continue to change, gaps will only widen and Maine will fall behind other states. On the contrary, if we consciously consider racial equity and racial impacts in the lawmaking process, we can achieve different results: a more welcoming, equitable, and prosperous state for all of us.

About MPRC:

The Maine People's Resource Center (MPRC) was formed in 1984 by leaders of the Maine People's Alliance (MPA). Our mission is to unite underrepresented Maine people, so that together they can identify common concerns and develop the skills, resources and experience necessary to represent themselves effectively in all decision-making forums and to win local, statewide and national campaigns for social, environmental, racial and economic justice.

We have served as a leader in statewide grassroots campaigns for expanded health care access, toxics use reduction, affordable housing, clean elections reform, racial justice, immigrant rights, LGBT equality and civic engagement, among others. MPRC biennially publishes *A Citizen's Guide to the Maine Legislature*, which helps everyday people learn about the members of the Maine legislature who represent them and about the legislative process.

MPRC is widely recognized for our effectiveness in engaging everyday people in organizing for change, many of whom have never previously been involved in a community concern or the political process. In 2010, MPRC engaged 2,306 volunteers in organizing for social change at the local, state and national level.

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