

## What People in Maine are Saying about the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act of 2015

"The Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce applauds Senator King for his efforts to ease work restrictions on asylum seekers. Enabling economic empowerment by removing barriers to work is a worthy cause. We support Senator King and his efforts to improve our communities." – **Matt Leonard, President & CEO of the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce.**

"I am so pleased that Senator Angus King has thoughtfully worked through the asylum seeker options and once again chooses to be a leader in a difficult but critical area of concern. We are very lucky to have him in the United States Senate representing Maine." – **John Bubier, Biddeford City Manager.**

"Senator King is approaching the problem in a rational, humane manner which addresses the public coffer problem while maintaining the dignity of individuals fleeing for their lives and having become the most vulnerable of our society. Senator King is to be commended for his leadership and humanity." – **Mark Russo, American Immigration Lawyers Association Liaison to Maine**

"Asylum seekers made the difficult decision of fleeing their home and homeland to seek safety, freedom and independence. Being on General Assistance is not the end goal for an asylum seeker, independence and freedom is. Shortening work authorization wait time will help to make that possible. This is good for asylum seekers, Portland and Maine. We fully support Senator King's federal legislation to ease work restriction on asylum seekers." – **Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (full quote [here](#))**

"We applaud Senator King for taking on this issue. The waiting period imposed by federal law causes a great hardship for Maine's asylum seekers who are eager and very willing to work as soon as they are able. A shorter waiting period would also greatly benefit the economy of the state. As Maine's population continues to age out of the labor market and move into retirement, Maine's immigrants provide the skilled workforce that the state needs for a strong and thriving economy." – **Sally Sutton, Program Coordinator, New Mainers Resource Center**

"We applaud Senator King for introducing this legislation as it provides a common-sense and compassionate solution. This change would allow people seeking asylum here the ability to provide for themselves and participate in our workforce soon after their arrival; thereby reducing their need for General Assistance." **Robyn Merrill, Executive Director, Maine Equal Justice Partners**

"I thank Senator King for recognizing the value that these asylum seekers bring to the economic future of our state; well-known analysts have told us that educated and ambitious people from around the world who recognize the opportunities to work and give back to Maine are a vital part of what we need to spark growth in our state." – **Anne Haskell, State Senator representing parts of Portland and Westbrook**