Tyler Omand
Freedom
LD 1259

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Heather Omand, I live in Freedom, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1259.

As a member of a rural agricultural community, legal immigrant farm workers are parents of children my son goes to school with, are neighbors, people we are in community with. There are stories from our community of ICE picking up fully legal immigrants, causing fear and confusion and alarm that any of us could be picked up by law enforcement at any time for disagreeing with or being inconvenient to the current federal administration (evidence that legal immigrants are being detained: source 1 below). Additionally, there is evidence that counterfeit ICE vests, badges, and patches are being sold online - and countless stories of ICE agents refusing to produce a warrant or identification when picking up immigrants across the country - meaning anyone could pose as ICE and kidnap someone off the street (source 2 is evidence of fake ICE gear being sold). The truth is, this is a terrifying and pivotal moment in time where state and local government must have the courage and morality to stand up to blatantly federal abuses of power.

I support LD1259 because Maine resources should be reserved for Maine people. Maine resources are already strained and limited, with overtime spending on police increasing by almost 30% over the last 5 years. All people in Maine need to be supported in seeking safety, health, and educational opportunities, so law enforcement, health care facilities, and schools must remain spaces they can access without fear of retaliation. Failure to maintain basic access would have catastrophic impacts on public safety and public health. Additionally, Maine law enforcement is not trained in the complex and changing area of immigration law, and does not have the capacity to add Federal law enforcement into their job description. ⌐SEP⌐

Immigrants are vital members of our economy and our communities, and they have constitutional rights. These people are our neighbors, we rely on one another! Immigrants in Maine are a critical driver of our state's economy. They do hard jobs, start businesses, and pay taxes. It's important for the legislature to value them for the future growth of Maine. Examples: ⌐SEP⌐

1. There are 32,200 immigrant workers in Maine, making up 4.5 percent of Maine's labor force (note: this includes immigrants who have naturalized).
2. Immigrant spending power in Maine is $1.7B.
3. Maine immigrants pay $625.1M in taxes each year.
4. Maine immigrants' contributions to Social Security are $205.5M.
5. Maine immigrants' contributions to Medicare are $57.9M. ⌐SEP⌐

Tourism, Maine's biggest industry, is heavily dependent on immigrant labor - and on immigrants coming to Maine for vacation. According to a 2016 report, "Immigrants account for almost 10% of workers in travel accommodation."

The following Maine specific stories show that Maine police have been instrumental in Trump administration's effort to deport people who don't have criminal records, are here legally, and pose no threat to public safety:
1. On Saturday, February 8th, while investigating a car accident in Eustis, Maine State Police detained 3 of the passengers and handed them over to federal Immigration authorities.
2. In mid-March, Maine State Police helped federal immigration authorities detain a 17-year-old minor who was traveling to work with his uncle.
3. On March 13, after a routine traffic stop, the Waldo County Sheriff's office handed a man over to ICE.
4. On March 11 and 12, U.S. CBP detained 16 migrant workers in Rangely. At least one of them was an asylum seeker.
5. 27-year-old Richard Sanipatin, an asylum seeker, was detained in Kennebec County in a routine traffic stop in mid March.

Clearly, this bill is desperately needed. I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259. Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,
Tyler Omand

Source 1:
https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/migrants-in-u-s-legally-and-with-no-criminal-history-caught-up-in-trump-crackdown. Additionally, there are at least 2 Maine families I know directly that truly believe their detained family members are here legally.

Source 2:
https://www.nbcnews.com/now/video/fake-ice-jacket-becomes-an-amazon-best-seller-232830533736 (this is one of many sources. A simple google search will produce more).