

Heather Omand
Freedom
LD 1971

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 1971.

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). While this bill deals with non-police organizations, it still feels incredibly important that we leave any organization that is not explicitly trained in the legality of immigration out of the process. If the foremost federal organization on immigration, ICE, is making flagrantly illegal arrests, we should not allow any other organizations to aid or assist. 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 LD971 because Maine resources should be reserved for Maine people. 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. By prohibiting non-police organizations to support the work of ICE we prevent people without adequate knowledge of immigration and legal policies from endangering our community.<sup>[L]
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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:<sup>[L]
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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.<sup>[L]
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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."

Clearly, this bill is desperately needed for the safety and legality of our state and community actions and relationships. I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1971. Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have.

Sincerely,
Heather 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.