

18 Otis Avenue  
Kittery, Maine 03904

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
Maine State Legislature  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

May 16, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I write to support LD 1259. This bill will protect public safety by clarifying relationships between state and local law enforcement agencies and federal immigration enforcement authorities.

Importantly, local and state police **already cooperate** with federal immigration enforcement in many ways, especially in criminal cases. LD 1259 **would not end that**. The bill is mainly focused on federal 257(g) contractual agreements that have become deeply problematic for local budgets and public safety, extending far beyond the usual and longstanding history of cooperation.

Contractual 257(g) agreements between local law enforcement and federal authorities often **deplete public funds** at the local level. Added costs of administration, staff, and overtime are paid locally, not by federal agencies. Diverting local law enforcement resources from local needs leaves our home communities underserved.

Substantial research shows that 257(g) agreements encourage racial profiling, including by local law enforcement. Federal training programs associated with the program are inadequate to prevent this and can even encourage it. Racial profiling jeopardizes public safety and violates Maine law. It can result in **false or overturned convictions** or costly lawsuits.

Ample research also shows that 257(g) agreements tend to **weaken public safety**. When local residents are afraid to communicate or interact with local authorities because they fear racial profiling or detention, safety risks rise for the entire community. When some residents feel they are being discriminated against, frustration and resentment can aggravate social divisions and feelings of alienation. By contrast, the strong relationships between residents and local law enforcement that are typical in many Maine communities protect public safety by increasing a collective sense of mutual aid and trust in our legal institutions.

Further, **Maine businesses rely on immigrants**, including in agriculture, health care, elder care, tourism, food service, hospitality, construction, and manufacturing. Our ageing state needs these workers. It is also a widespread misunderstanding that undocumented people don't pay taxes. Unless their employer breaks the law, undocumented workers **pay state and federal income taxes** as anyone else does (using assigned tax identification numbers instead of social security numbers), but without receiving social security payments or other benefits in return.

Although in recent years it has been difficult to establish broad public agreement on many specifics of immigration policy, the public largely opposes many current practices of federal immigration agents. These include well-documented and blatantly illegal and **unconstitutional violations of the basic rights of US citizens**, legal residents, and other immigrants with a range of legal statuses, as well as the multi-generational social harm of family separations. These practices have escalated in recent months, weeks, and days, even targeting elected officials attempting to conduct legal oversight activities. Most recent federal detentions have **no judicial warrant** and flagrantly **disregard the right to due process, including in cases of mistaken identity**.

For example, it is well documented by the rigorous journalism of CBS *60 Minutes* and the New York Times that **75%** of the 238 detainees illegally sent to the brutal CECOT prison in El Salvador without due process and in violation of a court order, have **no apparent criminal histories or evidence of gang involvement**. Another **22% have only non-violent offenses** such as theft, shoplifting, or trespassing. Only a dozen are accused (convicted or not) of murder, rape, assault, or kidnapping. Federal personnel persistently lie by describing deportees as violent criminals, gang members, or terrorists. For many years, research has shown that **crime rates are actually lower among immigrants** (including undocumented immigrants) than among US-born citizens. Most recent detainees (like the immigrant ancestors of most US citizens) are peaceful, contributing members of our society, as family members, neighbors, workers, and taxpayers.

Since its founding, the state of Maine, like the United States as a whole, has been **built by immigrants**. For generations, immigrants and their descendants have sacrificed their lives to protect our precious democracy and our constitution. As a retired military officer and lifelong conservative recently said about recent operations by federal immigration officials, “I want my soul back.” If we divert the important work of our local and state law enforcement officers away from their mission to protect local safety and instead contract them out to implement unconstitutional and inhumane federal orders to the detriment of our local budgets, security, and public trust, we would dishonor the **history and foundational values of our nation**.

Honoring the sacrifice of my great uncle, son of immigrants who gave his life at the Battle of the Bulge, and his brothers and sisters (including my grandfather), who showed our next generations that immigrants and their children often stand among the most fervent and loyal American patriots, I urge you to support LD 1259.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer Brewer