

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy
and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 1971, “An Act to Protect Workers in This State
by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies
with Federal Immigration Authorities”
Before the Judiciary Committee
May 19, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health’s mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate-friendly. I am here to testify in support LD 1971 which would provide clear boundaries that prevent local and state resources from being entangled in federal operations and helps ensure that Maine’s agencies serve all residents.

According to the US Census Bureau, as of 2023 only 4% of Maine’s population is comprised of foreign-born residents. These small but growing communities are an essential part of the state’s labor force and economy, and an integral part of Maine’s diverse and thriving communities.

As an environmental health organization, we believe that all communities and people in Maine deserve to feel safe in their communities and to have access to state programs that secure a minimum standard of living--like programs for well water testing and remediation to address common contaminants like arsenic or lead testing and abatement programs to avoid lead poisoning in children, for example. LD 1971 will prohibit state employees from inquiring into immigration status unless the inquiry is required by law or necessary to provide a service. It is important to ensure that state programs are as easy to access as possible and that the increased inflammatory rhetoric and fear mongering is not keeping people from being able to benefit from health protective and life-changing benefits.

We also believe that communities that tend to be heavily impacted by pollution and toxic chemical exposure should be able to call and collaborate with law enforcement and state environmental regulators if they need to report ongoing threats to our environment and natural resources. If people are afraid to collaborate with state officers, toxic spills, fires, and other threats might go unreported, affecting all of us.

LD 1971 is an important piece of legislation to make sure that we are supporting and protecting Maine’s thriving communities and protecting our environment for all. Therefore, we urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1971.