

Janet Campagna
Wells
LD 1259

To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,
My name is Janet Campagna, and I am a proud resident of Wells, Maine. I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1259 and to share the concerning realities of our town's current 287(g) agreement with ICE. Wells is, unfortunately, the only municipality in Maine that has entered into such an agreement, and the consequences for our community are significant and deeply troubling.

Since the implementation of the 287(g) agreement, we have witnessed a palpable increase in division within our town. This agreement, rather than fostering unity and trust, has created an environment of fear and rancor, impacting the social fabric of Wells.

Furthermore, this agreement has led to a clear diversion of crucial local resources. Our proposed town budget includes a request to fund three additional police officers, because our existing resources are already stretched thin. Alarmingly, mental health calls in Wells have increased by over 100%, placing immense pressure on our first responders. Despite these pressing local needs, every eligible police officer is slated to spend a significant 40 hours on online 287(g) training. This allocation of time and effort towards federal immigration enforcement comes at the expense of addressing the public safety needs within our own community.

Significant public safety resources have already been expended in addressing the numerous public questions and concerns that have arisen as a direct result of this agreement. Moreover, the negative impact extends beyond our local residents. We are receiving inquiries from potential out-of-town visitors and non-resident homeowners who are expressing their apprehension and uncertainty to our local businesses, town officials, and tourist offices. Why are we diverting valuable resources away from addressing local needs and potentially harming our tourism industry to support a federal responsibility?

Finally, while the 287(g) agreement has been presented as a necessary public safety measure, it is critical to acknowledge the infrequency of the situations it is intended to address. We are told this is about public safety, yet such situations have arisen only two to three times in the last two decades in our town. How can the diversion of significant local resources and the fostering of division within our community be justified for such rare occurrences?

LD 1259 offers Maine an opportunity to prevent other communities from experiencing the detrimental effects that Wells is currently facing. It is a chance to ensure that local resources are prioritized for local needs and that our communities remain welcoming and unified. For the sake of Wells and for the future of Maine, I urge you to support LD 1259.

Thank you for your time and consideration.