

Jamella Gow  
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LD 1259

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dr. Jamella Gow, I live in Brunswick, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1259. I study immigration policy as part of my work, and it is clear from research by academics, policy-makers, and community organizers that collaborations between ICE and local law enforcement ultimately make individuals and families more fearful to reach out for help from police in cases of crisis, make communities feel unsafe as they fear the chances of raids, negatively impact our diverse workforce, and, importantly, as we've seen in the news, can lead to traumatic experiences where families are torn apart. All community members, regardless of where they come from, need to be able to trust the people employed to protect them. Further, they should feel safe enough not to fear that they may be taken at home, at work, or even at school. 287g programs contribute to an unnecessary climate of fear during a time when immigration status has become deeply politicized and criminalized. In fact, most immigrants pay taxes, work hard, and avoid breaking laws because the consequences of detention and deportation are so dire not only for them but also for their families at home and abroad who rely on them for support. They contribute so much to the US socially, economically, and politically. However, more than that, we should recognize immigrants as people who are worthy of protecting and supporting. I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259. Thank you for your time.