

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Lucy Perkins, I live in South Portland, and I am submitting testimony in favor of LD 1259.

I support LD 1259 because immigrants are vital members of Maine's economy and local communities, and they have constitutional rights. Immigrants in Maine are the backbone of the state's tourism industry and export economies. They work hard jobs, run businesses and pay taxes; it is important to honor and recognize these contributions and the way we are all connected in fostering a welcoming, thriving, and safe place to live, work, and raise a family. Immigrants are also grandparents, parents, kids, relatives, and caregivers who stitch together the health and wellbeing of many communities. 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 and fear to seek access to these basic needs would have catastrophic impacts on public safety and public health.

Further reading into the impact of 287(g) programs suggests that these Memorandums of Understanding are in fact being used to purge towns and cities of "unwelcome" immigrants. A study titled "The Policies and Politics of Local Immigration Enforcement Laws: 287(g) Program in North Carolina" completed by the University of North Carolina found that MOAs tolerate racial profiling, causes immigrant communities to refrain from seeking help when needed, devastates communities that lose immigrants who contribute to the local economy, and creates a pathway for continued encroachment of basic fundamental freedoms. I do not want state and local law enforcement entering into agreements with an enforcement agency that disregards due process and uses dangerous and harmful tactics to detain people.

I urge you to support LD 1259, a necessary bill that protects those most vulnerable in our community and prevents a diversion of resources from the investigation of serious crimes.