

Testimony of  
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Good afternoon, Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary. My name is Deborah Deatruck, I live in Cumberland, and I am submitting this written testimony in *strong support of LD 1259 and LD 1971*. Both bills are critical to assuring fair and lawful treatment of New Americans who reside in Maine, are working and paying taxes, sending their children to school, and obeying all laws and immigration policies.

**LD 1259** would ban Maine police and sheriffs from entering 287(g) agreements, which deputize them to enforce federal immigration law on ICE's behalf. These optional programs are harmful, unaccountable, and unconstitutional, and are a direct attack on our communities. Maine Police should not be helping ICE tear families apart.

**LD 1971** would protect workers in the state and prevents all law enforcement agencies (state, county, local) as well as other officials from collaborating with ICE/Border Patrol.

I am a public health professional with 40+ years of experience in Maine, most recently as the Senior Vice President for Community Health Improvement with the MaineHealth system, from which I retired in 2019. I am currently a public health consultant and work on maternal and child health, rural health, and community health issues. I spent 8 years in state government as the State Dental Director and have been a researcher at USM's Muskie School and adjunct faculty for 10+ years.

Since 2022, I have been mentoring an immigrant family (husband, wife, and two children – one of whom was born at Maine Medical Center). They fled their home country in Africa due to political strife and war and survived an arduous journey across Central America, Mexico, and Texas, and a finally, a bus trip from Washington DC to Maine. In January of 2022, I picked up the husband on Route 1 in Freeport, where the family was living at a hotel, and took him to Portland where he wanted to apply for a job.

*That was almost three years ago.* Today, because of the passion and dedication of many people to give them a chance at the American dream, the husband and wife found jobs and an apartment, improved their English skills, secured health care (through the husband's job), established bank accounts, sent their kids to public school, and have paid state and federal taxes for the past two years.

**Last June, only a few days before their FINAL asylum hearing, they were notified by the Immigration Office in Boston that their hearing was postponed until April, 2026 with no reason given for the delay.** There was an unacceptable delay in these hearings *even before* the Trump administration took over in January, 2025.

**Now, this family fears for their safety and the safety of their children every day, when they get on the school bus, go to the grocery store or doctor's office. Passage of LD1259 and LD 1971 will help allay their fears and assure that all legal and constitutional protections are being implemented. I urge you to do the right thing for these families, who want to be responsible and safe from fear of random deportations by Maine police.**

Thank you.