

132nd Maine Legislature's Committee on Judiciary

RE: LD 1971: An Act to An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities

Testimony in favor of LD 1971

Chair Carney, Chair Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Pamela Proulx-Curry, I am Executive Director of the Maine MultiCultural Center (MMCC) which serves the greater Bangor area and a resident of Old Town. I am submitting written testimony today in support of LD 1971

Working, as I do, very closely with immigrants, I have seen firsthand the devastation caused by the current federal administration's immigration policies. A few days ago, I went to the home of a family that MMCC is working with. I have been to the home of a refugee family who are fully documented, permanent residents with work authorization papers. I have visited this family many times in the last year and have been welcomed into their home each time without hesitancy. This time the house was very silent and no one came to the door. I announced myself loudly to let them know that it was me who was the one at the door. Once satisfied that it was me, they let me in. The fear among immigrants, regardless of their status, is real and palpable. At this point there is no way that any of them would approach a law enforcement officer – to report a crime they had witnessed or from which they had been a victim. I believe that LD 1971 would help rebuild trust in local law enforcement and contribute to the safety, not only of our immigrant neighbors, but of all members of our communities.

I support this bill for the following reasons:

Protecting our residents benefits everyone. Crime is statistically significantly lower in areas with similar polices compared to areas without. Economies have also grown: from higher median household income, less poverty, and less reliance on public assistance to higher labor force participation, higher employment-to-population ratios, and lower unemployment.

We all want safety, but safety means being able to call the police when something's wrong, no matter who you are or how you look. When people don't trust police, they're less likely to report domestic violence, fraud, or unsafe working conditions—issues that affect everyone in a community, not just immigrants.

Maine's economy depends on immigrant workers, and stability helps everyone. Immigrants power key sectors across Maine. When families live in fear, they're less likely to show up to work, school, or civic life. That means missed shifts, empty school desks, and fewer people participating in civic life. LD 1971 gives communities the stability they need to keep working, learning, and contributing to a stronger Maine.

In response to a very real workforce shortage, MMCC has worked very hard to make the greater Bangor community a safe and welcoming place for immigrants in hopes of attracting and retaining immigrant workers to help bolster our economy. We do not want to see the progress we have made in the last few years undone. LD 1971 provides clear boundaries that

prevent local and state resources from being entangled in federal operations and helps ensure that Maine's agencies serve all residents.

I urge you to pass LD 1971.