

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Sarah Traub, and I live in Lewiston. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I am writing this letter in favor of LD 1259. I grew up in Maine, left for college and then some, and returned in 2018. My partner and I moved from Bath to Lewiston about 18 months ago. One of the reasons we chose Lewiston was the desire to live and build community in a more diverse environment. Lewiston has diversity on many levels, and it's one of the best parts of living here. We love walking through town and hearing snippets of multiple languages spoken around me. We love the variety of restaurants and markets. We love learning about different cultures through the many community events that happen through the year – music, art exhibits, local gatherings, and more. We are grateful to live in a city that, at least to some extent, welcomes immigrants and provides safety for them.

I won't lecture you about the economical value of immigrants, the taxes they pay, all the ways they contribute to our economy and to the vibrance of our community. Nor will I lecture on the constitutional rights of due process and equal protection, as I trust you are aware of all of those factors.

As new residents of Lewiston, we can see some of the areas where the city is struggling. From what I can tell, there is perhaps a strained relationship between the immigrant community and our local police department, whose job, in my opinion, is to keep EVERYONE safe. It concerns me to imagine how much worse this relationship would get if our police department were to forge an official relationship with federal immigration enforcement. Regardless of what specific actions would then occur (presumably more people detained, and families separated), the emotional damage done to the community by initiating such an agreement would not be insignificant. Perpetuating further trauma on a population that has already experienced its share, is unconscionable. And because these people contribute to our city and state economies and communities in such vital ways, the impact would not just be on them, but on the whole state.

Furthermore, even if immigrants did not contribute to the city and state in these ways, I would like to believe that Maine can continue to be a place where the most vulnerable people can feel safe and protected, and like their lives matter to the people in power. It will be a sad day when immigrants stop coming to Maine because it's not safe or sustainable for them to be here.

I would be so proud to be able to say I live in a state that will stand up for the constitutional rights of EVERYONE that lives here– a state that recognizes the immense value of a diversity of cultures and perspectives, and fights to protect that diversity. People in power on the federal level will come and go. Let's hold onto our integrity and our commitment to Maine being a place where neighbors look out for each other and lift each other up, and where we stand up for those who need it.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259. Thank you for your time.

Sarah Traub, LCSW
Lewiston, ME 5/18/25

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