

Pious Ali
Portland
LD 1971

Testimony in Support of LD 1971

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

May 19, 2025

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Pious Ali, and I serve as a Portland City Councilor At-Large. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity as a resident of Maine, an immigrant, and a long-time advocate for civic leadership and community development.

I write in strong support of LD 1971, because this legislation affirms two critical truths: that public safety depends on trust and that Maine's economic stability depends on the contributions of immigrant workers.

Across our state, immigrants are playing an increasingly vital role in filling workforce gaps, especially in sectors like health care, hospitality, agriculture, seafood processing, manufacturing, and elder care. Many of these jobs are not only essential, they are difficult to fill. Immigrant workers are showing up, stepping in, and keeping Maine's economy moving forward.

But that progress is fragile. When immigrant workers fear that interacting with local authorities whether to report a workplace issue, a housing violation, or even a crime, might lead to immigration consequences, they hesitate. They retreat. And in some cases, they leave the workforce altogether.

Let's be clear: if Maine's immigrant workers stop showing up for work, entire industries will feel the impact. Local businesses will struggle to stay open. Families won't get the care they need. The ripple effects will be felt in every corner of the state.

LD 1971 sends a clear and sensible message: local and state law enforcement are here to protect all workers, not enforce federal immigration policy. By establishing this boundary, we will promote trust, encourage reporting of abuses, and create safer, more stable workplaces for everyone.

In a time when worker shortages are among the most urgent economic challenges we face, we cannot afford to alienate those who are helping to close that gap. Protecting immigrant workers is not just a moral imperative it is an economic necessity.

I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 1971 and demonstrate that Maine will stand up for fairness, public safety, and economic resilience.

Thank you for your attention and leadership.

Sincerely, Pious Ali, Portland City Councilor At-Large

(Submitted in Personal Capacity)

Portland, Maine