

Sydney Cotter
Portland, Maine
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Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Sydney Cotter, I live in Portland, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Living in Portland, I've met many new Mainers who have immigrated from all over the world and I can honestly say they are the most kind-hearted, hardworking and honest people I've ever met. They are my coworkers, my neighbors and my dear friends. Our communities are lucky to have them.

In contrast, a few weeks after the presidential election, a client came into my workplace and said to one of my Latino coworkers "Looks like it's time for you and some of your coworkers to get your papers in order, because you won't be around much longer." This is the sort of senseless cruelty fueling ICE operations in our state.

I'll be honest, when I heard this story, I teared up thinking about my friend and his wife who have a toddler and have been saving up for years to bring the baby's grandmother to come live with them. "Only a few more months of saving and we'll be able to all live together as a family," he said. Now their family is a target, just like every other immigrant family in the US right now. Collaboration with ICE has turned our state from a safe-haven to a total disgrace.

ICE collaboration is not required by law, it is a choice. Therefore, we the people can and should choose not to collaborate in acts which lead to family separation and indefinite detention in a system with little to no due process. A choice that undermines trust in public institutions, spreads fear, strains local law enforcement, and diverts our resources away from the real issues and crimes we face locally.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you for your time.