

Bonnie Dunn  
South Portland  
LD 1259

To the Honorable members of the Joint Standing Judiciary Committee: My name is Bonnie Dunn, I live in South Portland Maine and I am writing today to testify in favor of LD 1259.

I have a friend who is an asylum seeker in our wonderful state. She has been here for four years, holds two jobs, and has built a life for herself. She is a law-abiding participant in our community, and has been faithful in fulfilling her responsibilities as an asylum seeker and as an aspiring member of our society.

She is beginning to understand and trust the sanctity of American law and local law enforcement's part in upholding it. When she had been here for about a year, there was dangerous & illegal activity happening in her apartment building. I urged her to report it to local police, and told her how to do it. She was fearful of calling because her experience in her home country was that the police would hassle her or detain HER in a similar situation. I was able to reassure her that Portland police would take her information seriously, and that she would not be at risk for reporting it. I felt that I could say this to her with certainty, and that is exactly what happened - the police took her information, thanked her, and she went home with a better understanding of how our local law enforcement is about keeping communities and people safe.

I ask that the Committee seriously consider the trust between law-abiding immigrants in our communities and local law enforcement as they decide the merits of LD 1259.

This trust, which is a building block of safe communities in Maine, could be severely eroded if law-abiding immigrants knew that local law enforcement contracted with and worked in conjunction with ICE in their enforcement activities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bonnie Dunn