

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary RE: “An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship between Local and Federal Law Enforcement”, May 19, 2025, 1PM

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zoë Lidstrom and I am a resident of Lewiston. **I am testifying in support of LD 1259**, “An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship between Local and Federal Law Enforcement.”

As you are likely well aware, Lewiston is home to many immigrant and refugee communities. Often, these groups receive some level of assistance at the local and state levels, including donations from food pantries. Since President Trump took office, many people have been fearful of leaving their homes, even to pick up food at scheduled pick-ups around town. Others feel unsafe traveling to church or prayer services. They cannot participate in normal, daily life for fear of being stopped, harassed, taken into custody, or worse.

Knowing this, and knowing that certain Maine communities have entered into working agreements with ICE, I reached out to the Lewiston Police Department asking if there could be some kind of public assurance that LPD does not and will not collaborate with ICE. I was relieved to learn that LPD’s current policy allows cooperation with ICE only where required by law, and that LPD has no interest in deepening their relationship with ICE.

However, I was dismayed to learn that the attitude of the Chief of Police and others in leadership positions was that “if people are here legally, then they have nothing to fear.” That is patently untrue. I hear news stories almost daily about legal residents and even citizens being arrested and shipped off to places like Louisiana or El Salvador because they had the wrong skin color, held the wrong beliefs about Palestine, had tattoos. *People are not safe.*

We need to take a stand against the terror ICE is wielding against our neighbors. Someone’s immigration status alone, no matter what it is, is not a threat to public safety. What is a threat to public safety is when people can no longer trust that local law enforcement has their safety in mind. **Please vote YES on this bill.**

Sincerely,

Zoë Lidstrom