

Mary Hunter
Lewiston
LD 1259

I live in Lewiston, which has a high proportion of immigrants. I know from personal experience that they are terrorized by the current state of affairs. One family I know is worried about sending their friend (who has a legitimate student visa) to see if there is a legal way for him to obtain employment; church congregations are smaller because people are frightened to be in newly vulnerable places. Adding this trauma to the ones most of them have already experienced is unconscionable.

Lewiston is also experiencing an uptick in gun violence, some of it within immigrant communities. Local law enforcement is trying to mitigate this, but if immigrants will not cooperate for fear of being deported, that helps no-one, and in the end harms our whole community. A bright line - well understood by both local police, civilians in our community and federal officials - would go some way to find solutions to this community problem.

I strongly support LD 1259. I entirely understand that if someone has committed a federal crime or is wanted for some other reason, and federal officers have the necessary judicial warrant identifying a specific person for a specific reason, local law enforcement must co-operate with federal authorities. But when the federal officials do not have the appropriate documentation, and are thus not adhering to the law when they take immigrants into custody, it puts local law enforcement into legal jeopardy if they are participating in an illegal action.