

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

From the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website: "CBP Home is now offering a voluntary, incentivized process for illegal aliens in the United States to return to their home country or another country that will accept them. Any illegal alien who uses the app and confirms their departure through the app will receive a \$1000 stipend." The U.S. *used to be* a perceived place of sanctuary for people from other countries, particularly people being threatened with torture or death in their own countries. The U.S. used to be "the country that will accept them". Now, the U.S. is imprisoning people and exporting people to a death and torture camp in El Salvador, without due process.

Almost none of us in this room are from the United States. Our ancestors came from other countries, often enslaving or killing the people who were already here. The concept that any land belongs to any *one* group of people is preposterous to me, and incredibly harmful. A healthier, more compassionate view is that as humans, we take care of other humans. Most of us did not "belong" in this country centuries ago. Now many of us apparently want to specify who doesn't "belong" in this country now, regardless of whether those targeted people are hard-working fellow human beings who, like the rest of us, are just trying to take care of their families in the best way they can. Targeted people are being taken away by ICE regardless of whether they have been in the process of becoming citizens, whether they have committed any crime, and whether they have lived in this country and contributed to their communities in a positive way for many years.

Please take a moment to really imagine the following scenario. Imagine that you and your family came to the United States because of the promise of a better existence. You've been working at least 40 hours a week, likely in a job that most US citizens would refuse to do because of the boring or back breaking nature of the work. You intend to start the process of citizenship. One day, you are suddenly and violently snatched out of your car or your house by armed, masked people. You're handcuffed and dragged away. Your family is screaming. You are terrified. You are also horrified for your family's sake, knowing you likely won't be able to contact your family for many days, if at all, to let them know where you are being taken. You are well aware that one of this country's strengths is its adherence to due process, but there is no due process here. In time, you find yourself on a plane bound to El Salvador, and you despair, knowing that you are heading to a situation much worse than that one you left behind in your country of origin.

I support these bills because I do not want Maine law enforcement collaborating with organizations and policies that are so very harmful to Maine residents and their families. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you for your time.