

Grace Valenzuela
Cumberland
LD 1259

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of LD1259, which would prohibit state and local law enforcement agencies from entering into contracts, agreements, or informal arrangements with federal immigration authorities that delegate immigration enforcement powers to local law enforcement.

I support this bill because it upholds the fundamental principle that local law enforcement should focus on protecting and serving all members of our communities—not on enforcing complex and often controversial federal immigration law. These agreements blur the line between federal and local roles. When local officers act as de facto immigration agents, the consequences are damaging. It has serious consequences on a number of issues.

- 1) Erosion of trust: Immigrant communities—regardless of legal status—are far less likely to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or cooperate with police investigations if they fear that any contact with law enforcement could lead to immigration detention or deportation.
- 2) Public safety concerns: Trust is the foundation of effective policing. When entire communities feel unsafe calling 911 or speaking to officers, public safety suffers—for everyone.
- 3) Racial profiling and civil rights violations: History has shown that these agreements often result in discriminatory practices, particularly against Black and Brown immigrants, and open the door to civil rights abuses.
- 4) Cost to local governments: Participation in federal immigration enforcement diverts local resources away from crime prevention and community services, often without adequate federal reimbursement. Taxpayer dollars should not be spent enforcing federal immigration law.
- 5) Legal liability: Municipalities and police departments may be exposed to lawsuits for wrongful detention or rights violations stemming from these agreements.

Our local law enforcement officers are not trained immigration agents, nor should they be. Their mission should be to keep our communities safe—not to tear families apart. Prohibiting these agreements will make our communities stronger, safer, and more just.

I respectfully urge you to support LD1259 and protect the integrity and safety of our local law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Grace Valenzuela
Cumberland, Maine