

## **Testimony in Support of LD 1259**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Benjamin Mitchell and I live in Falmouth. I write in my capacity as a private citizen - my views are my own and mine alone.

I write today to implore you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1259. In the past, I have worked with many New Mainers, and have found them to be kind, honest, pious, and hard-working people whose only wish is to build a new life in our great state. For much of my life I have heard people worry about the future of Maine - about how many of the few young people born here leave to work and start families elsewhere, and what that bodes for those of us who wish to remain. And yet here we have thousands of people who want to live here, who want to start families and work hard to provide for them. People who want to build and contribute to their communities, because they come from places - like Maine - that still have them.

We are richer for their presence not just in terms of actual material wealth (although that certainly is the case, as they come here to work jobs and start businesses that we do not have the population to support otherwise) but in showing us other cultures, other ways of thinking, and other ways of loving life and one another. We need them.

Regardless of your opinion on the deportation regime, we must acknowledge the reality that it is a program that tears terrified men, women, and children out of their homes and away from their families and friends. We should not be part of this process. If the federal government insists on doing this, it has more than enough resources to do it by itself. It does not need to draw on the scarce resources available to Maine, and we should not make them available.

For most issues, if the legislature takes an action - or refuses to act in a way - that inadvertently harms the state, its mistake can be remedied by the next legislature, if not in the next session. This is not one of those issues. Allowing Maine police to work with federal immigration authorities is irreparably destroying lives, homes, and communities. In far too many cases, it is a question of literal life or death. These New Mainers, your constituents, and your children will remember how you vote on this issue, in this chamber and on the House and Senate floors.

I doubt any of the esteemed members of the committee would disagree with my firm belief that the people of Maine - regardless of color, creed, or national origin - are among the most decent you can find anywhere on earth. You have an opportunity in LD 1259 to prove that. You will save lives if you vote Ought To Pass.