

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee. My name is Craig Cardamone and I am a resident of Winterport and I am writing to encourage you to vote in support of LD 1259, An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement .

We live in times of increasing political instability and fear. The current federal administration has set an unnerving precedent with the speed, intensity, and severity of their use of executive orders. Immigration has been the prime target of many of these executive orders. I've witnessed in my own community a significant breakdown in trust of our local and federal government. As a therapist, I consistently have people express their fears of being targeted by federal agents, including ICE and border patrol. Policies such as 287(g) agreements inflame people's fears and create an atmosphere of distrust. These agreements allow ICE agents to train our local law enforcement to engage in immigration enforcement and detention. We don't want to turn our local police forces into ICE agents who will do the bidding of an administration that is determined to disrupt and tear apart communities. As has been seen across the country already, ICE and local law enforcement who have 287(g) agreements have routinely engaged in racial profiling, detaining and deporting people with no criminal history and are here legally, and have not engaged in legal due process. 287(g) agreements also strain local budgets. For example, in Prince William County, Virginia, local officials had to raise property taxes and drain their rainy day funds in order to fulfill the requirements of these agreements. Essentially taxes are raised for a program that destroys communities and instills fear. This is not how I want my tax dollars to be used in our state.

287(g) agreements only invite harm and fear. They don't address any actual problems in our communities and only inflame harmful rhetoric being espoused by the current administration. Maine towns have no reason to enter into these agreements. For example, when Wells PD signed a 287(g) agreement there was no inciting incident and the move wasn't driven by any particular need. In short, it was unnecessary. Yet their signing of the 287(g) agreement brought fear to communities throughout the state. No one feels safer with these agreements in place.

If we truly want a safe state where everyone is welcomed and can thrive in their communities we should outlaw all Maine municipalities from signing 287(g) agreements. For the sake of all Mainers, immigrants and non-immigrants alike, we need Maine to stay a safe and welcoming state. I urge you to vote in favor of 1259. Thank you.