

Erica Paul
Portland
LD 2106

Thank you to the Maine legislature's Judiciary Committee for reading this testimony. My name is Erica Paul, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine writing to ask the committee to support LD2106.

I have been an early childhood educator for over a decade, and I believe it is critical to children's health and wellbeing to have access to education, nutrition, and stability. ICE's new operation in Maine threatens the physical and emotional health of our state's students and their families.

According to the American Psychological Association, fear of detention and deportation can lead to individuals and families keeping their children out of school and the community, which negatively impacts children's development and student achievement. Decisions like these are already a reality in Maine, and are growing more common with ICE's increased presence in our state. Passing LD2106 would help families feel safer sending their children to school regardless of immigration status.

LD2106 would protect schools, hospitals, and childcare centers by prohibiting ICE from entering these spaces without a signed, judicial warrant. People will be more likely to access these necessary services without fear for their safety and their children's safety. Maine owes all of its children, regardless of their immigration status or their family's immigration status, access to education and public health information without heightened risk of being in or witnessing a crisis situation.

I urge the committee to support LD2106 on behalf of all Maine children and families. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
Erica Paul