

January 27, 2026

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I regret that I cannot attend the hearing on LD 2106 and appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of this bill.

I am Professor of Spanish language and literature at Bowdoin College, and since 2017 have served as founder and director of our community engagement program, *Multilingual Mainers*. We promote the study of world languages across the state, offer professional development to educators and administrators, and provide targeted outreach to early elementary learners in our public schools. Bilingualism and multilingualism are proven assets that build empathy in our communities, strengthen our cultural vitality and expand Maine's workforce. I offer this testimony based on my own experience and not on behalf of my employer.

Every day, I see the benefits of maintaining and celebrating students' home languages: stronger literacy and academic growth, deeper family engagement, and pride in identity. At Kate Furbish Elementary school in Brunswick for example, we celebrate student proficiency in Spanish, French, Portuguese and Lingala as well as in Thai, Vietnamese, Somali, Swahili, Romanian, Arabic, Mandarin, Pashto, Gujarati, Tibetan, Urdu, Italian, Tagalog, Malayalam. In a predominantly monolingual English community, every child and family connected with the school benefits from these cross-cultural exchanges.

When immigration enforcement is visible in or near schools, hospitals, daycares, and libraries, families become afraid to access essential services. Students miss school, parents avoid school events, and trust erodes. Maine cannot afford these harms. As an aging state with persistent workforce needs, we benefit when newcomer families feel safe to learn, work, and put down roots—and when children can develop both English and their home languages without fear.

LD 2106 ensures that sensitive community spaces remain focused on learning, health, and connection, and that enforcement actions require appropriate judicial process. This clarity protects children, educators, and service providers while supporting the conditions that help all learners thrive.

Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 2106 to uphold safe, welcoming schools and to support the pride, retention, and long-term benefits of multilingualism for Maine.

Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret E. Boyle, PhD

Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine

Director of Multilingual Mainers