

Alisa Bouchard

Brewer

LD 2106

1/27/26

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Alisa Bouchard. I am a licensed psychotherapist and clinical social worker. I specialized in working with children and families, doing my practicum work at Casey Family Services in Portland and spending my first 2 years of post-graduate experience providing school-based therapy at a large elementary school in Maine, before going into private practice.

I have 3 children, ages 12, 8, and 6. They attend a public school in Maine.

As a parent and a mental health professional, my personal and professional judgment indicates that schools, daycare facilities, healthcare facilities, and libraries are no place for ICE operations. While I agree that the apprehension of dangerous criminals targeted by ICE operations is important, the physical and psychological risks that such operations taking place in these settings, especially without the oversight of a valid judicial warrant, would pose to children and staff greatly outweighs the potential benefit of such operations and furthermore, is not needed.

Children have a right to access an education and healthcare without the undue risk of experiencing trauma. Staff in these settings also deserve laws and policies that help mitigate their own personal risk and that ward off burnout and fatigue. A child's school, doctor's office, library, and daycare center and their relationships therein constitute a safe base, from which a child grows and learns. Without a safe base, children struggle to develop executive functioning and self-regulation skills, as well as positive identity. It is my understanding that without the passage of LD2106, there is a potential for masked, heavily armed ICE agents to enter these settings and detain members of a child's community. If this were to happen in front of children and staff, the needed, safe base described above would very likely be shattered. The level of trauma that witnessing such an incident would entail would not just put children and staff at risk for physical harm, but undermine their overall psychological and emotional health, well-being, and development. Such an event would very likely be clinically significant to children and staff and constitute a significant risk factor for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health concerns.

This is not a political issue, but an issue of public health and safety. It is our responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent and protect our children and community from physical danger and potential psychological harm, and passing LD2106 is one of them. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Sincerely,

Alisa Bouchard, LCSW