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Senator Carney, Senator Haggan, Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Kara Evans, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I am submitting this testimony urging this committee to support LD2106, An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review.

As a Social Worker who has been working in Maine since 2017, I feel compelled to speak out against the injustices, barbarism, and terror that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) is unleashing on our communities, among others.

As a therapist specializing in trauma, the impact of the actions taken over the last several months in communities across the United States already will be far-reaching, devastating, and multi-generational. We have seen parents taken from their children. Children taken from their parents. In other communities, we have watched Americans executed in the streets by this unrestrained paramilitary force. The vast majority of those detained have no criminal history, let alone one of a violent nature. In fact, many of those racially-profiled, harassed, stopped, and detained have been proven to be here legally. The lack of accountability in response to these actions by I.C.E. agents too afraid to show their faces or identify themselves adds another level of danger the situation at hand: I.C.E. has lowered the bar for their hires, and among their ranks include individuals with pending criminal charges. With no mechanisms for accountability or identification, it is unacceptable to allow these individuals access to schools, childcare facilities, and hospitals.

This bill asks the bare minimum of I.C.E. by requiring them to have a judicial warrant, signed by a judge, in order to enter public schools, public libraries, health care facilities, and child care facilities. These are all settings where safety is imperative in order for society to function. Children need to feel safe in schools, and parents need to feel safe having their children in schools. People need to be able to access healthcare without fear of being kidnapped by masked, armed men. I.C.E. should not be allowed to enter these spaces at all, but in the absence of basic decency and decorum at the helm of such agencies, we must as a State enact policies where we can to protect our neighbors and fellow Mainers.

The fact that these settings have been targeting by I.C.E. only serves as proof that they are not seeking “the worst of the worst” in their disgracefully-named “Catch of the Day” operations, and we have seen many examples of the contrary: They are seeking to fulfill a quota and terrorize our immigrant communities. This campaign of terror is being sloppily implemented using our own tax dollars while the cost of living and healthcare are steadily rising, and the dollar is weakening under an even weaker administration. The Trump administration’s utilization of I.C.E. is extremely unpopular amongst Americans, with the majority of people in polls sharing the belief that I.C.E.’s operations are making cities less safe. Please hear your constituents when we say we want I.C.E. off of Maine’s streets.

Enacting a bill such as LD2106 is a bare minimum way of clawing back a small bit of control from this extrajudicial, out-of-control paramilitary force that has been unleashed on our cities. In the interest of upholding the law, protecting immigrant Mainers, respecting the constitutional rights of Maine residents, and basic human decency I urge this committee to support this bill.