



Maine Education Association

Jesse Hargrove President | Beth French Vice President | Jaye Rich Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director | Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

Testimony

In Support of

LD 2106: *An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Warrant.*

Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association

Before The Education and Cultural Affairs committee

January 28th, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judicial Committee,

My name is Jesse Hargrove, I am a high school social studies teacher on leave to serve as Maine Education Association President. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators. Our members include teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems, and thousands of retired educators.

I offer this testimony today on behalf of the MEA in SUPPORT of LD 2106, *An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Warrant.*

Our students deserve a safe environment to learn - algebra, literature, music. Our school educators work to provide safe spaces. We do fire drills, learn procedures to handle bloodborne pathogens and communicable diseases, and unfortunately lock down protocols. Since the beginning of the school year, there has been an increased fear among our students and school staff. Families are keeping kids home and educators are missing classes. The sanctity of safe spaces has been replaced with anxiety. LD 2106 would restore long standing policy and practices that preserved the sanctuary of designated community spaces and ensure basic tenets of due process.

Our communities had been enriched for decades by New Mainers discovering what we have all known...that Maine is The Way Life Should Be. Immigrant communities revitalized traditional French speaking communities, new businesses emerged where mills closed, and youth found opportunity. While federal authorities claim those detained are the "worst of the worst" court records suggest otherwise and many have been in process for asylum with legal documents to work in the U.S.ⁱ, including a civil engineer and mother of four.ⁱⁱ Recent federal action has harmed communities by causing businesses to close, some temporarily, some indefinitelyⁱⁱⁱ and creating a culture of fear.

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Long-standing commonsense policy that ensured people could access public services have been diminished. Legal residents and citizens are afraid to attend school, access health care, and go to work. Students are staying home^{iv}. Critical staff are missing from their classrooms^v. Some school districts are developing remote school contingencies to keep students safe^{vi}.

For decades our schools have worked with local and state law enforcement. School Resource Officers have become trusted members of our school communities. However, local law enforcement are critical about the tactics fostering fear and distrust. Immigration and Customs officials' tactics are more aggressive with officials wearing masks, showing up in larger groups, and deploying tear gas, pepper spray, and weapons uncharacteristic of past practices. Their training time has been reduced to 42 days and is less substantial than State and local police who work on de-escalation and respect for constitutional rights.^{vii} Cumberland County Sheriff described the tactics as "bush league policing".^{viii} Our communities are growing more afraid and insecure about basic protections, federal agent limitations, and accountability

My classes debated cases involving police use of infrared cameras, specially trained dogs, and vehicle trackers to explore the parameters of Fourth Amendment protections. Never did I think we would be considering a society where masked law enforcement officials, in unmarked vehicles, detaining individuals without a warrant, without informing them of Constitutional rights, and without respect for safe spaces.

The environment of fear and intimidation is exactly why we need this bill. Schools can and must be safe places. School administrators in communities currently experiencing increased ICE presence are already utilizing policies that align with this bill. This bill will provide an additional level of protection to other important places such as health care settings and public libraries. It will encourage school districts and public service facilities to enact clear, consistent policies that preserve the safe spaces and protect due process rights for all. This will help families, and most importantly students, feel safe while at school – whether that school is in Portland, South Portland, or any other place in our state.

Thank you,

Jesse Hargrove
President, Maine Education Association

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ⁱ Whittle, Ramer, Willingham, "Court Records Raise Doubts that ICE is detaining the 'worst of the worst' in Maine, *Associated Press*, January 24, 2026 Accessed, [Court records raise doubts that ICE is detaining the 'worst of the worst' in Maine - ABC News](#)

ⁱⁱ Nieto del Rio, G "I want my Mom': Kindergartner Left Without her Mother as ICE Detains Parents in Maine", *Boston Globe* January 27, 2026

ⁱⁱⁱ Richie, Dana "ICE Activity in Maine is Hurting Businesses Owned and Staffed by Immigrants", *Portland Presse Herald*, January 26, 2026, Accessed [ICE activity in Maine is hurting businesses owned and staffed by immigrants](#)

^{iv} Russell, Jenna and Park, Sophie, "Maine's Immigrant Students Stay Home as ICE Operation Ramps Up", *The New York Times*, January 27, 2026 Accessed [Maine's Immigrant Students Stay Home as ICE Operation Ramps Up - The New York Times](#)

^v Scallon Ed.D, Ryan, "Superintendent Letter Re: Standing Together to Support Students, Families, & Staff", *Portland Public Schools* January 24, 2026, Accessed [Superintendent Letter Interior - Portland Public Schools](#)

^{vi} WGME Staff, "Portland Schools Working on Plans for Limited Remote Learning", *WGME*, January 27, 2026 Accessed [Portland schools working on plans for limited remote learning](#)

^{vii} Philbrick, Ian, "'We don't do that': Police Distance Themselves from US Immigration Agents' conduct.", *Boston Globe* January 27, 2026

^{viii} Simone, Julia, "'Bush-league policing': Cumberland County Sheriff bashes ICE After Arrest of Recruit", *WGME*, January 22, 2026 Accessed ['Bush-league policing': Cumberland County Sheriff bashes ICE after arrest of recruit](#)