

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Judiciary Committee, my name is Bridget Wright and I am a teacher in Lincoln County. I am writing to ask you to support LD 2016.

As a teacher in Lincoln County, my job isn't just to educate my students, but to provide a space where they feel safe and respected. It's essential that schools remain safe for students, and that all students and community members who need to come to school campuses can do so without fear. LD 2106 will provide necessary guidance for public school employees to ensure that no one provides voluntary consent for immigration enforcement officers, or those working in concert with them to enter nonpublic areas or access private information about a student or family's records.

Mainers are scared. Students and families are afraid. School should be a place where all students, regardless of their immigration status, can go to be educated, fed, and safe. Children should not fear coming to school, nor should parents fear leaving their students on school campuses. Right now, the lack of legal clarity is giving rise to these legitimate fears and concerns.

While Maine does not have the authority to prohibit all immigration enforcement at places like schools, hospitals, and daycares – which is governed by federal law – the state can put in place measures to ensure we are not actively permitting enforcement at these places.

ICE's current operations in Maine have families terrified. LD 2106 is something the Maine Legislature can do now to create safer public spaces in our state and provide reassurance and guidance to the public.

Schools, healthcare facilities, daycares and libraries are the backbone of American society. They provide essential services for all Mainers, from all backgrounds, born in Maine or from away.

We know that as goes Maine, so goes the nation. We must uphold our motto of "Dirigo." This is a way for Maine to protect its people and show the country what it looks like to take appropriate action.

For these reasons I strongly urge the Committee to support LD 2106.