

Testimony of Malia Demers, a New Sharon Maine Resident, in Support of LD 2106 to Protect Maine's Public Schools, Hospitals, Daycares, and Libraries from ICE

We are in the midst of a mental and physical public health crisis, as well as an education crisis that has slowly been building since Trump's first threats to crackdown on immigrants back in 2016. It is currently at a boiling point.

I implore you to pass this legislation because we need to make Maine's public schools, hospitals, daycares and libraries safe from the reckless violence of ICE and the trauma their presence causes. It is only in the last year that the Trump administration slashed the longstanding policy prohibiting immigration enforcement in these places. Prohibiting this did not pose an impediment to law enforcement. Preventing ICE from entering these places without a judicial warrant is a matter of child wellbeing. By doing this we could help to address the public health crisis that is currently erupting from families being too scared to leave their homes as they see their neighbors, even those here legally with no criminal record, being abducted.

This bill addresses public health - ensuring people in the community feel safe accessing healthcare, food and education they need. It addresses the workforce and economic issues that are currently plaguing the greater Portland and Lewiston areas - people can't work when they need to keep their kids home for fear their children will get abducted on the way to school. In the past week in my professional work with schools I've seen some really distressing things such as quiet cafeterias with only ¼ of the usual students, teachers doing their best to keep class going with only a few students, and school kitchens doing their best to provide food for children when members of their staff don't feel safe showing up to work.

Immigration enforcement is currently broad, indiscriminate, and carried out dangerously without concern for the law or the dignity of those who came here, often seeking a safer life. And children who often haven't known any other home but Maine are being torn apart from their families.

LD2106 would be a step toward protecting people accessing services at these locations as well as those who work there. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and the right of all children to education outweighs any need for immigration enforcement.

Sincerely,

Malia Demers