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This week, I signed up to volunteer for a local halal food pantry's new meal delivery program. The reason this food pantry has a new delivery program in need of volunteers is that members of the community who depend on their services are no longer leaving their homes for fear of illegal abduction and inhumane detainment by ICE. I have more to say today, but a part of me does think that the most I could say is to simply let that statement fill the silence: our neighbors are going hungry because ICE is waiting in the streets to tear their families apart. Preventing the hungry from eating, preventing the sick from seeking care, preventing students from attending school, preventing parents from caring for their children – these things are not law enforcement. These are hallmarks of a campaign of deliberate dehumanization and terror. ICE must be expelled from our hospitals, our schools, our daycares. We must do everything in our power to strengthen our communities against this relentless persecution by a militarized force acting without regard for law or justice. The moral imperative to pass LD 2106 is absolutely clear.

I also want to take a moment to speak to the threats faced by the workers at the institutions which LD 2106 will protect. I want our doctors, our teachers, our caretakers to know that when they stand against injustice to protect those under their care, that the full force of the law, of this legislature, of the State of Maine, is behind them. We cannot tolerate a state of affairs in which those who have dedicated their lives to the service of our communities feel that they stand alone in protecting our communities against authoritarianism. For the safety and security of everyone who calls Maine home, we must pass LD 2106. Thank you.