



January 29, 2026

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary in **support of**
LD 2106: An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without
Proper Judicial Review

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches, a coalition of seven Protestant denominations with more than 400 congregations and over 50,000 parishioners in Maine. The Council urges you to vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 2106 with an amendment* to include houses of worship as an additional type of location covered by the proposed statute.

As you may know, rescission of the federal sensitive location memo that had protected schools, hospitals, and houses of worship has caused enormous hardship, trauma, and undue stress to all those who work in, attend, or seek care in any of these places. The Maine Council of Churches and its seven member denominations have had to spend countless hours and dollars assisting local congregations as they scrambled to reconfigure their buildings, signage, and worship services in attempts to keep members safe and to prevent immigration enforcement actions from disrupting people exercising their religious freedom through access to religious services and seeking spiritual guidance and comfort from their communities of faith.

Houses of worship maintain important records containing personal information about their members—including records of baptisms, marriages, financial contributions, home addresses and phone numbers. Preventing immigration enforcement gaining access to these without a judicial warrant would protect members' privacy and their right to free expression of their religious beliefs.

Protecting houses of religious worship as sensitive locations where immigration enforcement actions are prohibited defends religious freedom, ensures community safety, and guarantees access to essential services without fear of deportation. Protecting these areas upholds the First Amendment by preventing government surveillance and intimidation in, or near, sacred spaces, which have historically been considered safe havens. Conducting enforcement actions at churches and other places of worship infringes upon congregants' constitutional rights.

For decades, the federal government recognized a simple truth: Targeting people at houses of worship violates religious freedom and harms communities. The change in federal policy that removed the sensitive location designation from houses of worship is dangerous. It has chilled religious exercise, undermined public safety by driving people into the shadows, and infringed upon clergy and congregants' constitutional rights.

Several other states have addressed these concerns by passing bills similar to LD 2106, among them Tennessee, Iowa, and Montana. We at the Maine Council of Churches hopes to see Maine added to that list.

PLEASE VOTE “OUGHT TO PASS” ON LD 2106 and amend it to include houses of worship as protected locations.

*Suggested amendment language to consider:

Amend the emergency preamble to reflect the inclusion of meetinghouses pursuant to 13 MRSA c. 93.

13 MRSA c. 93, §X is enacted to read:

§X. Limitation on Immigration Enforcement in Religious Societies Meeting Houses.

1. **Voluntary consent prohibited.** A person acting on behalf of a meetinghouse may not provide voluntary consent permitting a law enforcement officer engaged in immigration enforcement or supporting immigration enforcement to enter a nonpublic area of the meetinghouse access, review of parish records. For the purposes of this section, "law enforcement officer" has the same meaning as in Title 16, section 638, subsection 2.
2. **Exceptions.** This section does not prevent compliance with a valid judicial warrant authorizing entry into a nonpublic area of a meetinghouse or a search of parish records or compliance under exigent circumstances.

This section may not be construed to prohibit or restrict any person acting on behalf of a meetinghouse from sending to or receiving from federal immigration authorities information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of an individual; from requesting from federal immigration authorities information regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of an individual; or from maintaining or exchanging that information with any other federal, state or local government entity pursuant to 8 United States Code, Sections 1373 and 1644.

This section does not prohibit a person acting on behalf meetinghouse from challenging the validity of a judicial warrant or subpoena in a court of law.

Jane Field
Maine Council of Churches
LD 2106

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Protecting these areas upholds the First Amendment by preventing government surveillance and intimidation in, or near, sacred spaces, which have historically been considered safe havens.

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