

Alexander Bertoni
Westbrook
LD 2106

To the members of the Maine State Legislature,

We are witnessing the escalating impact of a law enforcement agency operating under the presumption that it is unencumbered by the law. In Maine, we are seeing the results of poorly trained, often unidentified forces detaining and destabilizing our community members, frequently based on racial profiling rather than specific criminal evidence. This is made worse when most of the officers hide behind masks, shielding themselves from responsibility for their actions.

While the stated goal of these operations is the removal of individuals with violent backgrounds, we've seen the reality to be far less surgical. Schools, courtrooms, and hospitals are being turned into zones of fear. Children are stripped from their parents. People with proper documentation are detained for days without access to legal recourse. U.S. citizens are brutalized in ICE's warpath. In this environment, documentation status often becomes secondary to the immediate trauma inflicted on anyone who "looks the part" or seeks to protect their community members.

While federal guidelines exist, they are frequently bypassed or interpreted so broadly as to be meaningless. This makes it imperative that Maine create and reinforce its own legal guardrails. We must hold individuals and organizations accountable at the state level when they violate the sanctity of our public institutions.

I live near a school that serves many children of immigrants and asylum seekers, families who fled violence and persecution abroad and arrived in Maine, one of the safest states in the Union. To see that fear return is devastating. The long-term impacts are already manifesting: parents are withdrawing children from schools, skipping life-saving healthcare, and avoiding the very court dates required to maintain their legal status.

LD 2106 is a necessary step to restore normalcy. It protects "sensitive locations" that must remain neutral ground for a functioning society. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill to protect our neighbors and ensure that "law and order" actually includes the protection of human rights.