

I am the Reverend Claire L. Curole, Board Certified Chaplain, writing to testify in support of LD2106. I testify in my personal capacity as a religious professional and not on behalf of any of my employers, past or present. I am unable to appear in person today as I will be on duty in one of Maine's healthcare facilities.

The first reason I support LD2106 is that patients and their families should not have to fear immigration detention while they are seeking necessary medical care. We know that deferring timely care too often leads to increased suffering, illness, hospitalization, even preventable disability and death. In the case of infectious disease, treatment delays also raise risk for the wider community.

Risk to the wider community is the second reason I support LD2106. Our healthcare facilities employ people from around the world in many roles, from specialist physicians, nurses and technicians to the cleaners and clerks that keep these institutions running around the clock. Neither laborers nor licensed professionals should fear immigration detention when they show up to do the work of caring for our community. Maine is a rural state with an aging population and we cannot afford to lose the workers that keep our health care systems running.

The third reason I support LD2106 is ethical. The major faith traditions of the world teach us that caring for the vulnerable is the right thing to do. Scripture common to the Jewish and Christian traditions exhorts us to welcome the stranger, remembering our own estrangement and vulnerability. In this state of Maine, where the majority of us, or our ancestors, are immigrants to the homeland of the Wabnaki people, let us take good care of our communities by advancing this legislation.