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LD 2106

My name is Dr. Elena Maker Castro and I am a resident of North Yarmouth, Maine. I am a developmental psychologist with expertise in the development of immigrant-origin youth.

I am writing/speaking today in support of LD 2106, which would restrict federal immigration enforcement from entering hospitals, libraries, daycares, and schools without a judicial warrant. These places serve as critical resources for thousands of individuals and families in our state. But many of our neighbors are too afraid to access these spaces because of the recent indiscriminate, violent actions of ICE. By restricting ICE's access to these community places, we can ensure that everyone can use these basic services without fear. We can furthermore help to protect the mental health of young people who are too scared to leave their homes, let alone learn.

We've seen online, in the media, and in our own lives that healthcare providers, teachers, and caregivers feel unsafe going to work, families are afraid to send their children to school, and people are afraid to seek medical care they need. These disruptions harm the public health and well-being of our entire community. LD 2106 would mitigate some of these impacts by prohibiting ICE from accessing sensitive locations that people rely on to meet their basic needs.

In this frigid winter, many of our neighbors experiencing homelessness are also putting themselves at further risk due to fear of ICE. Libraries often serve as daytime warming shelters while also providing access to resources and information that can help unhoused people move out of homelessness. Hospitals and emergency rooms often serve as these individuals' only source of healthcare. If our unhoused neighbors are afraid to use these locations, they may stay outside or avoid treatment — putting their lives at risk. LD 2106 could remove a barrier to potentially life-saving services for individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty.

Please support LD 2106, and ensure that Maine's schools, libraries, healthcare centers, and daycares are a safe place for all who need them.