

Chuck Cohen
Temple Beth El, Augusta
LD 2106

To the Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Chuck Cohen, and I am a resident of Monmouth, Maine and am chair of the Social Justice Committee at Temple Beth El in Augusta. I am testifying today in strong support of L.D. 2106.

For over 25 years, Department of Homeland Security policy was that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) were substantially restricted from conducting immigration arrests in or near sensitive locations like houses of worship, hospitals and public schools. As part of the federal government's current mass deportation program that policy has been revoked. While there is currently a bill in Congress, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (S. 455/H.R. 1061), that would restore such protections, that bill, like so many other pieces of federal legislation, appears stalled. Thus, it is critically important for Maine to enact L.D. 2106 at this point, to at least partially restore some of the protections that Maine residents had to go to schools, health care facilities, child care centers and libraries without fear of being caught in an immigration dragnet based on how they look, what they wear, or how they speak.

All over the state today, people of color and recent immigrants are afraid to go out to take their kids to schools, to go to work at health care facilities and to even get food, regardless of whether they are here legally and are doing everything that the law requires due to current ICE and CBP enforcement schemes. I urge the Committee to vote out L.D. 2016 with an "ought to pass" recommendation and that such legislation be enacted on an emergency basis so that Maine people can resume some sense of normalcy as they go about their lives in the current hostile immigration environment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Chuck Cohen
Monmouth, Maine
Chair, TBE Social Justice Committee