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LD 2106

I would like to begin with a story that reflects what this debate looks like on the ground in Maine right now. A close friend of mine is a school social worker at Deering High School. In recent months, she has been experiencing extreme stress, not because of a lack of commitment to her students, but because hundreds of the students she serves are afraid to come to school each day. Students are asking whether it is safe to walk through the doors, whether their parents will still be home when they return, and whether simply showing up for class could put their families at risk. This constant fear has taken a serious toll on students' mental health and on the educators and social workers who are trying to support them.

This fear did not arise in a vacuum. One of the Trump administration's first actions upon taking office was to eliminate a long-standing federal policy that prohibited immigration enforcement actions at sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals, and other places where people meet their most basic needs. For decades, across both Democratic and Republican administrations, this commonsense policy ensured that everyone could access essential public services without fear.

Lawmakers from both parties recognized the critical public policy reasons behind these protections. Ensuring that all children, regardless of immigration status, can attend school provides education, nutrition, stability, and safety. Ensuring that all people can seek medical care allows public health information to be shared freely and prevents avoidable health crises. These policies were never viewed as a meaningful impediment to law enforcement, and the benefits to public health and community well-being clearly outweighed immigration enforcement concerns.

Under the current administration, immigration enforcement has become broad and indiscriminate. Immigrant communities are being targeted as a whole, creating a public health and mental health crisis marked by extreme fear, trauma, family separation, detention in inhumane conditions, and deportation to life-threatening circumstances.

In Maine, the impacts of this approach are deeply felt. Since the beginning of the Trump administration's mass deportation campaign, immigrant families have been afraid to leave their homes, go to work, send their children to school, seek healthcare, access social services, attend religious services, practice their faith, or move freely in their communities.

These fears were intensified in September 2025, when immigration agents conducted an arrest in the driveway of an elementary school in Portland, despite there being no justifiable reason that the arrest could not have occurred elsewhere. This incident sent shockwaves through communities across the state and underscored how harmful enforcement at sensitive locations can be.

Now, with a new ICE operation underway in Maine, the need for LD 2106 is heightened and urgent. More than 21,000 United States citizen children in Maine live with at least one non-citizen parent. These children are directly impacted by the fear and instability caused by aggressive immigration enforcement.

LD 2106 directly addresses the mental health and trauma crisis created by mass immigration enforcement. It protects immigrant communities in Maine and supports the well-being and healthy development of children. The bill also protects people who are accessing services at sensitive locations, as well as the workers who provide those services in schools, healthcare facilities, daycares, libraries, and similar settings.

This legislation is also critical for Maine's workforce and economy. When parents do not feel safe sending their children to school or daycare, they cannot reliably go to work. Fear at sensitive locations undermines economic stability for families, employers, and communities statewide.

While Maine does not have the authority to prohibit all federal immigration

enforcement at sensitive locations, which is governed by federal law, the state does have the authority to ensure that it is not actively permitting or facilitating such enforcement.

Under the Constitution, to enter non-public areas, law enforcement officers must present a valid judicial warrant or receive voluntary consent. LD 2106 provides clear guidance that immigration officers are prohibited from entering these sensitive locations without a valid judicial warrant and that workers at these locations are not permitted to provide voluntary consent for entry.

The bill also clarifies that sensitive locations are prohibited from voluntarily sharing immigration-related information about Maine residents with immigration officers unless a valid judicial warrant is presented or disclosure is otherwise required by law.

In doing so, LD 2106 protects the rights, safety, and dignity of vulnerable Maine residents, including children and frontline workers. It advances critical public policy goals by ensuring that all children in Maine can access education, that public health information is shared freely, and that essential services remain safe and accessible for everyone.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to support LD 2106. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lauren Brown