

Matthew Kennedy
Portland, ME
LD 2106

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Matthew Kennedy and I am a resident of Portland, Maine.

I am writing 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.

I am a physician in Portland, Maine, and I have serious concerns about the safety of my community. It is imperative that all community members feel comfortable seeking medical attention. Further, any interference from federal immigration enforcement in the hospital/healthcare setting could cause serious harm to patients and community members. Violence in the healthcare setting is antithetical to our mission to serve patients. I am deeply concerned about this risk as well as the risk of compromising patients' right to privacy in their health information. These concerns extend to other settings including libraries, daycares, and schools as these are all crucial to fostering wellbeing in our community. The presence of ICE in our community, abductions, and separations of families has created a public health crisis of fear and trauma for countless Maine residents and families.

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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.