

Hello Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the committee on Judiciary,

I am Willow Cunningham, a lifelong resident of Portland, and I am here to speak in support of LD 2106. Growing up there and going through the Portland Public School system, I was lucky to meet and learn from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. My education and development as a young person was enhanced greatly by the influence of my immigrant classmates.

I say all this because if my classmates had been afraid to go to school because ICE might abduct them at any moment, if my classmate's parents had been unable to receive medical care because they might never see their children again if they went to the hospital, if that welcoming and safe environment was made into another traumatizing and dangerous place for my classmates, I would never have been able to meet and learn from them. I would be a shadow of myself today.

The fact that this criminal narrative is getting in people's heads is disgusting. The children I grew up with are not criminals. They are kind, intelligent, firm, and proud. And when one group of students is singled out and targeted just because of where they're from, or how they look, the safety and quality of life for EVERYONE suffers.

This is not a radical piece of legislation. What we are asking you to do is to restore the bipartisan status quo that has kept people safe in our state and across the country for decades. ICE should not operate in spaces like schools and hospitals, period. ICE should not operate in our state at all. I strongly urge you vote "ought to pass" on LD 2106, and I hope that this is the first step in a campaign to restrict ICE's ability to terrorize the families that make Maine great. Thank you.