

Testimony of Melissa Hackett

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In support of LD 2106, An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review

January 29, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Melissa Hackett, testifying on behalf of the Maine Children's Alliance (MCA).

MCA is a policy and advocacy nonprofit focused on improving the well-being of children and families through data-driven solutions and community-informed change. For more than 30 years, MCA has been a trusted voice in child advocacy in Maine — advancing policies that strengthen families, expand access to early care and education, and promote children's health, safety, and economic security.

As the statewide advocate for Maine children, we are deeply worried about how the increased presence of ICE is impacting children and families across Maine.

Children thrive now, and in the future, when they have stable, nurturing relationships and a supportive community. Yet many Maine families are afraid they will be taken by ICE if they leave their homes right now. Children are not at school where they can learn and connect with their friends. Parents can't get to the grocery store to make sure there's enough food on the table. Children are afraid their parents will be taken from them.

There are more than [21,000](#) U.S. citizen children in Maine who have at least one non-citizen parent.

The isolation, hunger, and fear happening hurts children now, and can shape their lives forever. The ripple effects impact us all.

Maine children and families deserve to have safety in their homes and in their communities. That's why we support efforts like this bill that would ensure children and families can feel safe to go to school, to pick up groceries, to get care, to work, and to play.

This legislation also provides important information and protections for workers in these spaces, should they have to interact with ICE. Provisions of the bill support long-held practices that safeguard non-public spaces as such, and reinforce constitutional protections around circumstances in which law enforcement could enter such spaces. These provisions ensure that Maine workers know their rights and protections, too.

Maine children and their families are counting on us to step up for them - as their friends and neighbors - to give voice to their fear, and to take action to protect the peace and safety they deserve.

We urge this committee, and your colleagues in the Legislature, to pass this important legislation.