

I am testifying in favor of LD 2106. For years, federal policy ensured that basic human needs, like education and healthcare, were accessible to all, regardless of their immigration status. Through multiple presidential administrations, Republicans and Democrats alike affirmed that all people deserved to safely seek medical care and to educate their children. These are not partisan values. They speak to the heart of who we are as humans.

President Trump removed these protections. Right here in Maine, we are in the midst of a campaign of mass deportation that has seen citizens and noncitizens alike rounded up, harassed, arrested, and moved to detention camps out of state, sometimes without access to legal representation. Families have been torn apart. Due process has been thrown out the window, or, one could say, into the back of an unmarked SUV. My friends who are in this country legally, including American citizens who were born here in Maine, are frightened. They have been afraid to leave their homes as ICE raids have torn through our state. Even people with documented legal status are terrified. Imagine the impact on a family where everyone might not have that status.

As a parent, I want all children to feel safe going to school, and for all parents to feel safe letting their children leave home to go to school. I am both a student and a teacher, and I feel for the many teachers who want clear, consistent guidance on what happens if federal immigration officials arrive at their classrooms.

As the daughter of a nurse and a doctor whose core beliefs included safe, accessible health care for all, I am horrified that many people in our state who are not receiving the care they need for acute illness or chronic, serious, life-threatening conditions because they are afraid they may be seized by immigration while seeking medical care. Health care providers need to be able to take care of their patients, and health care workers who are themselves immigrants need to know that their workplaces are safe.

In Maine, we take care of our neighbors. We take care of one another. LD 2106 affirms that spirit of community care. We will not stand by while our neighbors live in fear, staying home, endangering their health, enduring mental trauma, being shut out from learning and the support of their school communities. LD 2106 will help protect the Constitutional rights of all people who live in this state, where so many of us are, we must remember, immigrants, living on Wabanaki land.

I urge you to pass LD 2106.

Respectfully,

Susan Dickson-Smith