

Joan Beal
Norway
LD 2106

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 2106.

My name is Joan Beal and I am a resident of Norway Maine. I am a person of faith, a Unitarian Universalist of 50+ years. Our religious principle of justice, equity and compassion in human relations compels me to speak in support of this bill. I have helped and worked with Afghan immigrant families since their arrival in Lewiston, helping them to move beyond the unbelievable trauma that they have faced as they fled their collapsed nation. Their children are now in day care, the parents working and were finally beginning to trust that they had a future in this country. We expect justice, equity and compassion from a government that is supposed to serve and protect all of us. Surely it does not need to be said that armed, masked Federal agents entering schools, hospitals, libraries and day care centers dragging people out of homes and destroying property in their wake, is a frightening, and intimidating threat to everyone, especially to those who are just beginning to hope in a better, productive life in the United States. We need our government to stand up and prohibit this thug-like army from acting outside the bounds of a law which we once all took for granted in our Bill of Rights. Workers and staff members in these institutions need to have the back-up of our state government to act in a manner which once was , and still should be, automatic. No judicial warrant, no entry.

Another of my religious principles is the use of democratic processes in our lives and in society. Yes, that is a religious principle for many of us. Our democracy requires trust in the government and trust in the rule of law. Never has it been so fragile. Our state government is now tasked with reminding our Federal government, which is supposed to protect us from external threats, to protect us from the internal threat of a Federal military force which has no respect for the law. Not only will immigrant communities be protected by the clarification provided by this law, but we will all have at least some protection from a Federal military force which has gone from protection to invasion. Please move this bill to passage for the sake of our workers, New Mainers, and, in fact, all of us.