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LD 2106

UPDATED NUMBERS AND TESTIMONY. The only inaccurate part of my last submission was the numbers given. I still believe wholeheartedly the rest of it.

My name is Mira Hotait, I live in Fryeburg, 04037, and graduated last May from Fryeburg academy. I'm of legal Arab descent. We are not aliens.

I grew up in the public school system. At least once a week, I panicked about hearing loud sounds in the hallway. I didn't want to be a martyr. But I'm white presenting. Imagine knowing that if a shooter entered your school, you were the target. Because your skin is black, olive, or brown. Your teachers have no back up from the Maine legislature, supporting them in their protection of you.

According to CNN, 32 were killed in school shootings across the US last year. 54 is also reported. I do not wish to minimize these numbers, which are disgustingly above 0, but in the first month of 2026, 9 people have already met their end at the hands of ICE. These are only the documented cases. The Guardian reports that in the first 10 months of 2025, ICE detained at least 2600 minors. Their only crime was color.

Imagine for yourself. Being used as a worm on a fish hook, to catch your parents swimming upstream. Your shooter would not be punishable by law. And he didn't need to prove anything about you, criminal record or immigration status, to lock you up and send you to a state or country you've never seen.

The excuse I've heard is that you can't expect respect if you don't belong here. But these are children. Why is it that there is greater concern about a criminal slipping through the cracks of this bill, than about innocent lives being compromised.

Additionally, we all admitted to the stress which was brought about by the covid 19 pandemic and remote learning, now cross check that with masked men walking through your school, armed. We were taught how to hide, to go to the bathroom in the bucket, to not whisper a word. Lights off, door locked.

No one should have to go to school in fear. Please represent, committee, that fear mongering and scapegoating are not what Maine is about.

I urge you to vote to pass on LD 2106, as it is a small step in a big injustice.