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LD 2106

My name is Caitlin Smith, and I am a resident of Old Town. I am writing in support of LD 2106.

I am submitting this testimony as a Maine resident, a parent, and a constituent who is deeply concerned about how recent federal immigration enforcement actions are affecting people and communities in our state. Reports from around the country — and increasingly closer to home — describe enforcement operations that involve excessive force, detention of legally present individuals, and actions that raise serious constitutional concerns. Regardless of one's views on immigration policy itself, enforcement must remain bounded by due process, civil rights, and proportionality.

LD 2106 represents an important step in clarifying Maine's role and limits with respect to federal immigration enforcement. Clear guardrails around cooperation, transparency, and accountability help protect not only vulnerable residents, but also the integrity and trustworthiness of local and state institutions.

I recognize that people hold very different views about immigration enforcement policy as a whole. My goal is not to settle that broader debate; rather, my goal is to assert that, regardless of your stance on immigration enforcement, the role of law enforcement officers is clearly defined: to enforce laws within legal and constitutional limits. When individuals with power are permitted to act outside the confines of their legally-defined positions, it undermines all law enforcement. Historically, we have seen time and time again that when rights become conditional — based on the color of your skin, where you were born, or which political party you are affiliated with — rights are no longer rights; they are privileges.

When enforcement actions are carried out without clear limits and accountability, the consequences are not abstract — they are human. National reporting has documented repeated incidents in which legally present individuals were detained, encounters escalated unnecessarily, and operations unfolded in ways that frightened children and destabilized entire communities. Whether one supports or opposes immigration enforcement policy, no one should accept a pattern of fear-driven enforcement that places families and bystanders at risk.

We should all be alarmed by any environment in which children are exposed to armed enforcement operations in everyday spaces, where people fear being stopped without cause, or where the use of force appears disconnected from immediate threat. That is not a partisan concern — it is a constitutional one.

My seven-year-old daughter's school was on lockdown recently due to credible threats to her safety. Although this is the result of one individual's action, when we see events like this in our communities, it reflects a climate of heightened fear and instability. Every time I see a report about children being afraid to go to their own schools, or tear gas being deployed in public spaces, my stomach churns at the thought of any of those actions happening to my own child. Regardless of how you feel about immigration, I think we can all agree that unlawful or insufficiently regulated use of force that we are now seeing repeatedly impacting young children is never okay. It is never justified.

As a Maine resident, I want my state government to take reasonable steps to ensure that enforcement actions within our borders align with constitutional standards and with Maine's long-standing values of fairness, due process, and community safety.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this bill.