



Testimony in Support of LD2176: An Act to Create a Right to Judicial Review Under the Maine Civil Rights Act for Persons Erroneously Detained

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable committee members; I'm Scott Turcotte from Community Action Alliance, a nonprofit representing Maine's immigrant and BIPOC communities. On behalf of our members we ask you to vote Ought to Pass on LD2176.

The recent surge of ICE activity has upended and terrorized communities in Lewiston, Portland, and beyond. Members of the immigrant community who have lived, worked, and raised families in Maine for a decade or more - who have complied with every step of the immigration process as defined in our laws on asylum - have been ripped from their families and communities. Community members who were born in the United States or who have earned citizenship have been targeted based on their skin color or the languages they speak. ICE agents have routinely stretched or flouted laws regarding searches and seizures as a matter of official agency policy, violated the rights of Mainers of all backgrounds, and sought to maximize the violence perpetrated on marginalized communities in an attempt to pursue the political goals of the current administration. This is not law and order - this is not routine enforcement - this is a direct attack on the civil liberties we all hold dear.

In these circumstances, it is the responsibility of this legislature to do everything it can to ensure that the Constitution and the laws of our state are respected and obeyed by any and all law enforcement officers operating in Maine. It is also necessary to provide legal recourse for those whose rights have been violated by these law enforcement officers, or those rights will have become truly meaningless. This legislation would do just that, by clarifying the rights guaranteed under the Maine Civil Rights Act and by providing resources to civil legal service providers to defend those rights. This legislation would not, as its critics may claim, defund, abolish, or otherwise hamper any legal law enforcement activities in our state. Indeed, this legislation promotes law and order by guaranteeing that all community members are protected from violations of their rights and the violence and lawlessness we have seen perpetrated by bad faith actors in our state.

We ask that you join us, our members, and Mainers across the state in standing up for those who can't stand up for themselves. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD2176.

Scott Turcotte
Community Action Alliance
LD 2176

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