

April 25, 2025

**LD 1656, An Act to Facilitate Compliance with Federal Immigration
Law by State and Local Government Entities**

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Judiciary committee.

My name is Lawrence Lockman, I live in Bradley, and I am here today in support of LD 1656, An Act to Facilitate Compliance with Federal Immigration Law by State and Local Government Entities.

I would direct your attention to the April 18, 2023 memo from the Federation for American Immigration Reform, referencing Portland's city ordinance enacted in 2017 prohibiting local officials from honoring ICE detainers. An earlier ordinance enacted in 2003 forbids police and city employees from inquiring into anyone's immigration status.

Today I want to focus on the human cost of protecting violent criminal aliens from deportation.

49 year-old Freddy Akoa of Portland was beaten to death in his Cumberland Ave apartment on the evening of August 9, 2015. Three assailants beat and kicked him for hours, and bashed Akoa in the head with furniture.

Akoa had 22 rib fractures from the savage attack, cuts and bruises all over his head and torso, and a lacerated liver when his assailants left him to die on the living room floor of his apartment.

Four days after the savage murder, three Portland residents aged 23, 31, and 36 were arrested and charged with murder.

Would anyone be shocked to learn that none of the killers is a US citizen?

The 31 year-old killer had 33 prior criminal convictions.

In fact, two of the killers had lengthy rap sheets, with 68 arrests between them prior to the murder of Freddy Akoa.

Akoa isn't the only Mainer who paid with his life so that Portland's progressive politicians can feel good about themselves.

In 2017, the man charged with murder in the 2015 death of a teenager in a Portland recording studio pleaded guilty to the murder charge.

A judge sentenced Gang Deng Majok to 30 years in prison for the death of Scarborough teen Trey Aresnault. Majok, who also goes by the nickname "Bang Bang," shot Arsenault multiple times in a crowded recording studio in Portland's Old Port on May 26, 2015

Investigators say Arsenault was an innocent victim, just listening to a friend sing when he got caught in the middle of the shooting.

Majok is not a US citizen. He came to the US from Sudan in 2002.

Once again, this is a case of a career criminal non-citizen with a long rap sheet, but because the politicians in Portland handcuffed and muzzled their own police department, federal immigration authorities were never notified.

Here's the bottom line for me, ladies and gentlemen: these career criminals should have been deported long before they had a chance to kill Freddy Akoa and Trey Arsenault. If you're not a US citizen, you're our guest, and you better be on your best behavior. One strike, you're out. These guys should have been deported after their first brush with the law. And if the city of Portland had been sharing information with federal immigration authorities, Freddy Akoa and Trey Arsenault would be alive today.

My only suggestion for improving the bill would be to jack up the penalty for municipalities that choose to maintain their sanctuary policies from \$500 a day to \$10,000 a day. That should get the attention of the Portland city council.

Portland – the Other One – Should be a Wakeup Call for All

April 18, 2023



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While distressing, it's not surprising that towns adjacent to the U.S. — Mexico border incur large populations of illegal aliens and asylum seekers. After all, every month more than 200,000 of them waltz through Biden's open-door stretching from San Diego, California, to Brownsville, Texas, many settling in nearby communities. The big surprise is that after crossing onto U.S. soil, hundreds of migrants are choosing to journey 2,300 miles north to the unlikely city of Portland...the one in Maine, while they await their asylum hearings.

Despite the distance and chilly climate, Portland's toasty-warm, sanctuary city-style hospitality, liberal benefits, and disregard for lawful status more than compensates. Portland, Maine, codified its status as a sanctuary city under a 2017 ordinance prohibiting local officials from honoring ICE detainers. Consequently, word-of-mouth is out on this once-quintessential New England town as a preferred migrant hub.

This small city of 68,311 has big problems. Since January, 930 asylum seekers have arrived in Portland, 80 more each week, most in dire need of housing assistance. This steady influx has forced officials to place them in 12 local hotels, school gymnasiums, and now for a second time, in Portland's large Exposition Center. Costs have skyrocketed such that the city's social services budget has increased \$43 million over last year, with the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency picking up part of the tab. Making matters worse, local officials are warning that \$43 million is not enough and are now suggesting a whopping 15 percent increase in local property taxes to pay the bills. Even local officials are crying "uncle." Portland's Director of Health and Human Services recently advised DHS that, "if your organization sends a family to Portland, Maine they're no longer guaranteed shelter upon their arrival to our shelter."

Yet they keep coming, and that's on top of the population of earlier migrants who have been arriving for years. A seemingly closely-held secret is the total number of migrants now living in Portland, which leads one to believe that local officials don't really want the public to know. One clue may exist forty minutes north of Portland in Lewiston. Of that city's 36,000 residents, 6,000 are now African refugees and asylum-seekers. If proportional, Portland may have over 10,000.

Overwhelming and unsustainable best describes the unfolding crisis in Portland, but even before the

recent surge, the city had housing challenges serving its homeless population. One large nonprofit in Portland reports that all three of their shelters have been full, while 75 homeless residents overflow nightly into tents on the street. In response, Portland just opened a 50,000-square-foot, \$24 million, 208-bed shelter. On its opening day, it filled to capacity.

Schools are being hit hard. Currently, the Portland school district has more than 2,300 students who come from homes where at least 60 different languages are spoken, representing about 34 percent of total enrollment. 1,400 of these students are identified as English Language Learners. The district said it has seen 612 new multilingual students begin this year, the highest in more than 20 years. In order to adequately educate the growing number of migrants, Maine will need to increase its number of LEP-qualified teachers by as much as 110 percent.

Although it has a current emergency, in truth, Portland's migrant crisis has been brewing for years thanks to longstanding sanctuary policies and far-left, virtue-signaling local officials, and increasingly radical NGOs working on behalf of migrants, oblivious to the needs of local citizens. The Maine Immigrant and Legal Advocacy Project, for one, militantly denies that Portland's resources are tapped out. Instead, the NGO claims the real problem is, "the result of "poor federal government planning in furtherance of a racist and xenophobic immigration system that disproportionately harms Black, Brown, and marginalized immigrants."

And the choreography between Maine's Chamber of Commerce, and Senator Susan Collins isn't helping much either. The Chamber cites the state's low unemployment rate as justification to support endless flows of people. But alas, asylum seekers face a required federal waiting period before they can hold a job, so Collins has come to their rescue. Her proposed bill would grant instant employment eligibility for migrants, never mind that doing so will provide even more incentive for people to fraudulently claim asylum in pursuit of work permits. And that new labor pool the Chamber longs for will, in fact, be publicly subsidized workers whose housing, health, and educational costs more than offset any tax contributions.

Things are a real mess in Portland, a place Longfellow once referred to as, "the beautiful city by the sea."

For now, the state's official slogan "Maine, the Way Life Should Be" is still displayed on highway signs welcoming all who enter. But if the migrant crisis in Portland isn't soon resolved by imposing sensible limits and enforcing rational laws, that quaint motto should be revised so that it serves as an ominous warning to visitors facing similar futures in their states:

"Welcome to Maine, the Way Life Will Be."