



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Melanie Sachs

84 Kelsey Ridge Road
Freeport, ME 04032

Residence: 207-299-6825

Melanie.Sachs@legislature.maine.gov

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**Testimony of Representative Melanie Sachs in support of
*LD 1259, An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between
Local and Federal Law Enforcement*
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Melanie Sachs, and I am proud to represent the community of Freeport in the Maine Legislature. I appear before you today to express my strong support for ***LD 1259, An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement***.

Before serving in the Legislature, I spent six years on the Freeport Town Council. I remain closely connected to our dedicated town staff, including our town manager and public safety officials. I am a co-sponsor of LD 1259 because it reflects the concerns of our local leadership.

In February 2024, Freeport officials received an email from the Maine Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA), which shared information from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations—Boston Field Office. The email encouraged local law enforcement agencies in Maine to consider entering agreements under the 287(g) Program.

Specifically, two models relevant to Freeport's Police Department were proposed:

- The **Warrant Service Officer (WSO) Model**, which authorizes local officers to execute civil immigration warrants.
- The **Task Force Model (TFM)**, which involves ICE oversight **during routine police duties**. (my emphasis)

The latter model is especially concerning. Not only is the scope of “routine police duties” alarmingly broad, but the email explicitly stated that “The task force model is still under development, and we will provide more information once it becomes available.” Asking local law enforcement to commit to a vaguely defined and potentially expansive agreement on immigration enforcement raises serious public safety and governance concerns. As Freeport's town manager stated, “*We strongly believe that participating in these collaborations does not meet the core mission of the Freeport Police Department.*”

You may ask: why support statewide legislation that prevents municipalities from entering into such agreements if Freeport has already declined? The answer lies in another part of the same email, which reads:

“ICE recognizes the importance of its relationships with its law enforcement partners to carry out its critical mission. In addition, several states, including but not limited to Georgia and Florida, have passed, or are considering, state legislation mandating law enforcement agencies (LEAs) seek out or enter into memorandums of agreement (MOA) with ICE pursuant to a partnership under the 287(g) Program.”

That message makes it clear: without proactive protections, Maine municipalities could one day be compelled—either directly or through external political pressure—to participate in these federal programs, regardless of their local values or public safety priorities.

LD 1259 is a forward-looking measure that reaffirms the autonomy of Maine communities and the integrity of our public safety systems. I urge the committee to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.