

Good morning. My name is Lawrence Reichard; I live in Belfast; and I am here today to urge you to vote for LD 1259 and LD 1971.

I have spent much of my professional life living, working and organizing in refugee and farmworker communities, and in legal services for those communities, here in Maine, in California and in Texas.

I have lived and worked with refugees fleeing war in Central America, and with farmworkers who work hard to put food on your table and on my table.

The immigrants, refugees and farmworkers I have known have been honest, hardworking and selfless people utterly dedicated to their families and their communities, both here and back home, and often to their religion. Having never met you before, they would literally give you the shirt off their back. They pay taxes and get little in return.

And now these friends and neighbors are under attack by our federal government. They are literally being abducted off our streets by warrantless masked *and unidentified* federal agents. For many of these friends and neighbors, this is a repeat of the fascist terror they fled back home.

We cannot allow this kind of terror-ridden authoritarianism to take root in our communities. We must resist it at every turn. My father fought fascism in World War II, and good, dear friends of mine fled fascism in World War II. One such friend fought street fights with fascists in Berlin in the 1930s, as the Nazi

Party was rising to power, and later smuggled Jews over the Pyrenees from France to safety in Spain.

Another such friend, the pre-eminent, world-renowned mathematician Peter Lax, who died three days ago worked on the Manhattan Project at the age of 19.

Authoritarianism doesn't take power overnight. It takes time, and it must be resisted at every turn.

We must not allow – and we must not be complicit in – the illegal and unconstitutional abduction of our friends and neighbors. We must fight and resist this at every turn.

As German pastor Martin Niemöller famously wrote:

“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Well, now they're coming for the immigrants, for the refugees, for the farmworkers.

None of us is threatened with authoritarianism...until we are. Make no mistake about it: this is that moment. And history will judge harshly those who dawdled while Rome burned.