

To: Senator Anne M. Carney, Senate Chair Judiciary Committee

To: Representative Amy D. Kuhn, House Chair Judiciary Committee

To: Members of Judiciary Committee

RE: Testifying in support of LD 1259 — An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement

From: Katharine Parsons, Rockport, ME.

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee: My name is Katharine Parsons and I live in Rockport, Maine. I am here to offer testimony in support of **LD 1259**.

ICE has expanded its 287(g) Program to target “sensitive areas” such as hospitals, churches, and schools in its raids. These raids are profoundly traumatic to a community. Migrant workers are not showing up to work and produce is being left to rot in the fields. Their children are not going to school. They are afraid to go to church.

But these raids are more than traumatic. They are also economically crippling. Maine has an agricultural industry which contributes \$5 Billion a year to our economy. About 30% of Maine’s agricultural workforce is hired. Some of these workers hold H2A visas, but others, like Maine’s \$360 Million blueberry economy and its \$265 Million dairy economy, use migrant labor. Nationwide, 55% of the workers in the dairy industry are migrant workers.

But the dairy industry has another, larger spin-off and that is its cheese industry: that fuels Maine’s economy to the tune of \$600 Million a year. My sister is an award-winning artisan cheese maker in Androscoggin County, and if raids carted off the migrant workers who power the local dairy, her small but mighty business would collapse. Adding these three sectors together: the dairy, the blueberry and the cheese economies amount to \$1.225 BILLION for Maine. In a small farm operation, in any one of Maine’s 2000+ farms, carting off a few desperately needed migrant workers will tank their businesses.

These raids—some call them kidnappings—will also irrevocably damage the trusting relationships with local law enforcement. We would be left to wonder if our friendly local deputy who we sat beside at Dunkin’ Donuts was the same masked, unidentified thug who wrenched a phone out of a grad student’s hands before he threw her into an unmarked car which sped off to an undisclosed location.

And so I, and many other Americans, are looking to Maine for guidance, leadership, and courage. Please vote in favor of this bill. Thank you.

Katharine Parsons
Rockport, Maine
katharineparsons@gmail.com