

May 19, 2025

Testimony in Support of LD 1259 and LD 1971 – Submitted by Susan Kiralis

Good evening Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Susan Kiralis. I'm a proud immigrant, Indigenous woman, mother, and resident of Vassalboro. I serve as Vice President of the Board of Maine Equal Justice and a member of the Aspire Leadership Team.

This June marks 18 years of living in Maine—raising my children, working, starting a small business, and advocating for human rights. Maine is my home.

I want immigrants like me to be seen for who we are: vital members of this community. We are farmers, teachers, caregivers, business owners, artists—we work hard, we pay taxes, and we raise our children to be proud Mainers.

We contribute billions in spending power and millions in taxes. Maine's tourism, health care, and elder care industries depend on us.

But when local police act as immigration agents, it creates fear—not safety. People are detained during traffic stops, teens are arrested on their way to work, and asylum seekers are treated like criminals. These are not threats to our safety—they are our neighbors.

This kind of enforcement makes us less safe. It erodes trust, discourages people from calling for help, and tears families apart. It starts to look—and feel—like apartheid. A system that divides, excludes, and punishes based on identity.

LD 1259 is a step toward justice. It protects local law enforcement from being dragged into federal immigration enforcement, and it protects our communities from fear.

I urge you to support this bill—not out of politics, but out of humanity. Let's not let fear guide our policies. Let's choose justice.

Thank you for your time and your leadership.

Respectfully,
Susan Kiralis