

My name is Sulheya Almatrì and I live in the Brunswick area. Thank you so much for creating this space to hear community concerns and our support for LD 1259 and 1971.

Being a child of immigrants, I experienced and grew up in communities that endured a lot of hardship including difficulty finding meaningful work with a living wage and navigating institutions and hometowns that have structural racism built into the fabric of them. As a young teenager, I read and explained immigration documents to parents and family members, and I know the feeling of living in fear of separation from family. Today in Maine, families live in this fear. As parents walk out of their door to work they wonder if they will be able to return at the end of the day to their children because of the collaboration between our local police departments and federal immigration authorities.

As a Palestinian, I am in awe of the current administration's detainment of peaceful Palestinian protesters with legal status here. Local collaboration with immigration authorities that are egregiously violating the constitutional rights of human beings has the effect of making all of us live in fear of what might come next.

Because of these illegal practices, I know families here in the state that have legal status are afraid to go out in public and drive in a car because of the color of their skin and the ways that deportations are happening around the country without rhyme or reason. This time will go down in history as one of the most cruel to black and brown people everywhere and in Maine. We must take a stance.

Our local police departments have enough work to do, and they are not qualified to assume the role of federal immigration authority officials. They certainly should not be put into the position of analyzing the constitutionality of federal protocols, opening up the state of Maine for liability. Our local resources should be used for local issues, not open us up for local law suits and promote chaos. These practices are disrupting family life in ways that will have ripple effects for generations through the trauma that children experience in households living in fear. **All of the not for profits I have worked for in Maine have centered the research of Adverse Childhood Experiences, if we do not pass LD 1259 and 1971, we are most certainly creating adverse childhood experiences for innocent children across the state.**

As a working mother I took time away from my job and my children today to stand here to speak out for the families that would experience great risk should they speak for themselves right now. These bills together, if they pass, would bring peace of mind to so many families. Thank you so much for the work each of you do everyday and the ways that you strive to hear people and create balance in our state. **This is one of the most important calls to action I have ever participated in and I trust our elected representatives to do the right thing here. Thank you so much.**