

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be with you today.

I am the Rev. Dr. Jodi Cohen Hayashida and I'm a resident of Auburn. I organize the statewide movement Multi-faith Justice Maine under the auspices of the Maine People's Alliance on whose behalf I am here today, asking you to vote in support of both LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Every faith tradition explicitly teaches either care for the stranger and the foreigner or compassionate care for all life. The version of this teaching that we are probably most familiar with culturally comes from Leviticus 19:34- "You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: " But the teaching exist across traditions. Unitarian Universalism teaches the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." Hinduism teaches "ahimsa." Buddhism teaches "metta." Islam reminds us that the prophet Muhammad was himself a refugee who fled violence, to lift up just a few others. Whatever our tradition, we are taught to recognize and honor the sacredness of life and treat it as such.

As a minister who is in relationship with a statewide faith-based community that includes many immigrants of faith, I can attest to the hard truth that immigration enforcement practices in this country stand in direct opposition to these teachings of compassion and collective care.

We've all seen the local and national stories of racial profiling, people who are here legally being kidnapped, disappeared, and moved overseas, general and widespread harassment, and community members who are afraid to go to work, to school, and to worship. While Border Patrol officials many years ago explained that the best way to keep people from arriving in this country was to terrorize those who are already here so severely that everyone else gets the message, federally sponsored terrorism is not a legitimate tactic of deterrence and it is certainly not a moral one.

When local law enforcement takes up this work, they undermine their own legitimacy as a community resource. I would not turn to them to support many of the vulnerable people to whom I minister, nor would I encourage others to do so. This places all of us at greater risk, from most vulnerable who no longer feel safe engaging with local LEO's to local taxpayers who would be on the hook for any financial liability that resulted from their municipal law enforcement carrying out illegal and unconstitutional enforcement activities, as we have seen happening with increasing regularity.

I ask that you help us preserve our ability to care for our collective well being by voting "ought to pass" for bills LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Jodi Cohen Hayashida

Auburn, ME