

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Willow Cunningham. I live in Portland, and I am here to testify in favor of both LD 1259 and LD 1971.

I completed my graduate studies at the University of Maine this spring. With the threats against non-citizens in our country this year, I have seen an alarming chilling effect on all speech and actions taken by my international colleagues. Folks that were once involved in our graduate workers union have taken a step back and deleted their social media in fear of retaliation. Friends who once spoke freely with me about political matters now glance at the door to make sure we are alone, or simply change the subject.

Legal permanent residents, students here on visas, and all kinds of non-citizens in this state are afraid of ICE. They're afraid of being detained on trumped up charges with no due process, and they are right to be. We can't have this same terror being triggered by our police force.

287(g) agreements only serve to undermine public safety in our state. These agreements pull the focus of Maine law enforcement away from solving serious crimes in the name of doing ICE's job for them. Furthermore, when non-citizen Mainers are at risk of being subjected to an immigration investigation whenever they reach out to a police officer, that reduces the willingness of a large portion of our community to report crimes that have been committed against them.

When local police collaborate with ICE and border patrol, they are actively putting our most vulnerable communities at risk. In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of both LD 1259 and 1971. Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.