

Good afternoon, Chairs, members of the committee. My name is Faisal Khan, and I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 1259 and LD 1971.

I come before you not just as an advocate, but as someone who has walked with immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers—our neighbors—who are building lives, raising children, and dreaming big dreams right here in Maine.

These two bills—LD 1259, which would prohibit local law enforcement from entering harmful 287(g) agreements with ICE, and LD 1971, which clarifies how state and local police relate to federal immigration authorities—are critical to protecting the soul of our state and the dignity of its people.

Let us be clear: 287(g) agreements are voluntary, unaccountable, and harmful. They turn local police—who should be building trust in our communities—into enforcers of a federal deportation system that has ripped apart families, driven traumatized children into detention centers, and spread terror through communities who simply want to live in peace. These programs have no place in a just society.

We must remember who we are. The state of Maine has long been home to immigrants and refugees from all over the world. From French Canadians and Irish workers to more recent arrivals from Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Sudan, and beyond—we are a beautiful mosaic. A mosaic made of dreams, hopes, and aspirations, stitched together by courage and resilience.

And this mosaic is not just beautiful—it is essential. Maine's prosperity, like that of every state in this union, is being built on the backbone, with the sweat, and the hard work of immigrant and refugee communities. From our farms and fisheries to our hospitals and schools, immigrants are the engine of growth—and yet, too often, they are treated as disposable.

We must stop calling them "aliens." That word is dehumanizing and demeaning. They are non-citizens, yes, but they are human beings—with families, values, dignity, and stories.

Most of the people impacted by ICE collaboration and unjust enforcement are Black and Brown immigrants and refugees, many fleeing war, persecution, and poverty exacerbated by U.S. foreign policy and international neglect. To retraumatize them here, in a place they hoped would offer safety, is a betrayal of our professed values.

We cannot claim to be a nation of justice, law, or morality if we deputize local officers to work hand in hand with a system that is systemically unjust. When people are afraid to report domestic violence, to speak up against wage theft, to take their kids to school—that is not freedom. That is not safety.

Maine has a choice—to either follow the tide of cruelty and fear, or to stand boldly on the side of justice, compassion, and constitutional integrity. You, our lawmakers, have both an ethical

and constitutional obligation to protect this beautiful mosaic, to embrace it, cherish it, and defend it.

So today, I urge you—vote yes on LD 1259 and LD 1971. Stand with our communities. Stand with the children who deserve to grow up free from fear. Stand with the people who are making Maine stronger every single day.

Thank you.