

Good afternoon. My name is Lucas Bent. I'm a lifelong Maine resident living in Berwick, and I'm here to testify my strong support for both LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Just a few days ago, I graduated from the University of Maine in Orono. At UMaine, many of my friends are immigrants. Many of my professors are immigrants. And from talking to them, I know that many of my immigrant friends and professors would love to be here today, and in spaces like this in general, advocating against detainment without due process, against the arbitrary deprivation of rights, and for the rights of all people. But many of those people aren't here today, because every day, more and more, they're living in fear, fear that they too might be detained without due process, deprived of their rights, driven away from their families, simply for speaking their beliefs.

As a resident of York county, I along with countless others in the southern Maine community were horrified to learn that Wells Police Department agreed to assist Immigration and Customs Enforcement in a "task force model" in which local officers are given immigration enforcement authorities during routine duties, as well as receiving training directly from ICE. This is done via ICE's 287(g) program.

And why is this so horrifying to me? Well, the reactions of my friends, as well as recent high-profile ICE detainments such as that of Mahmoud Khalil, with no due process, make it crystal clear to me that ICE is not here to protect our communities. Our welcoming Maine communities. No, immigration enforcement is here to tear us apart. I have professors who take separate phones with them when they leave this country for fear that they will be apprehended at the border, searched and seized due to their political leanings. I have friends who are right now frantically working to clear their internet footprints, friends who have stopped speaking about certain subjects over the phone, because they've watched on TV as fellow immigrant students are kidnapped and detained by ICE, often without due process, for nothing more than their beliefs. ICE is scaring Maine residents into silence.

Far from protecting our communities, ICE collaboration with local law enforcement is the last thing our communities need. That's why I'm here today. That's why dozens of Wells citizens are out on the streets every week protesting their PD's 287g agreement with ICE. Rather than waste our resources striking cruel fear in the hearts of our neighbors, let us help our neighbors instead. By preventing Maine police from entering in 287g agreements, and prohibiting Maine law enforcement from entering into contracts with federal immigration enforcement, *that's* how we can really protect our beautiful, proud Maine communities. And that's why I urge you to please vote in favor of both LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you.