

Members of the committee,

My name is Joshua Langtry, my community knows me as Teacher Josh. I run a nature based early learning program in Saco, where I serve 24 children and their families. I come to you today to testify in favor of this bill. I don't have enough time in 3 minutes to share with you all of the worries my parents have expressed to me but I am submitting them in my written testimony for your review. I'll read a few:

"As a Jewish child I once asked my mother if we needed to go into hiding. As a Jewish mother I am heartbroken that children are needing to ask these questions once again. We must ensure that all children are safe from harm while at school."

It gives me anxiety wondering if my child will be witness to any of the excessive force ICE has used in many documented instances. I worry for how that will impact my child's feeling of safety in a place that each one of us in our family considers a safe space."

Under the current administration, immigration enforcement is broad and indiscriminate, targeting immigrant communities in general and creating a public health crisis that includes extreme fear and trauma, among immigrants and citizens alike. It has become clear in recent days that even as citizens, we are not safe.

It is not unreasonable that the only limitation we are asking for is that ICE can produce a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge before entering the special sanctuaries of childhood like our preschool or our local library.

Through my work as a social worker I have directly witnessed how detrimental ICE has been to our communities in Maine. Children should be focused on learning, not worrying about how they will get home safely or whether or not their parents will be gone when they arrive. Schools need and deserve more support to protect children

Another parent is now wearing a baseball cap wherever she goes to appear more white. She says "Every night I go to bed wishing this is all just a nightmare."

Another parent requested my personal cell phone number so that she can call me in case she is abducted and unable to pick up her child so that I might care for him in her absence.

These are just a few of the concerns my parents have. In the last week I've had to cover for an employee who is a long time green-card holder and military spouse because she was too afraid to leave her house. I've had to come up with policies to try to plan for an ICE raid, and we've

had to find ways to gamify emergency drills in a way that would minimize trauma for young children. This is not a sustainable situation, this level of fear does enormous harm to the healthy development of young children.

On one side of the coin, this bill would create more certainty for me and my fellow directors and that's why I support it. I'd like to believe that we are a nation of laws that can be enforced.

On the other side of the coin I have a lot of worry. This bill would call on us to be the enforcers. It would instruct me to tell ICE "Under Maine state law I am not allowed to let you in without a warrant". But we know from example after example, in Minneapolis and right here in Maine, that ICE doesn't care about following the law. On January 13th, DHS even wrote on X that ICE officers have "federal immunity in the conduct of their duties" and that "no state official can get in the way of your...duties". We saw that when Renee Good and Alex Petti were murdered in the streets, the DHS secretary branded each of them "domestic terrorists" to justify their actions. Even here in Maine we have video evidence of ICE agents taking pictures of license plates and then telling upstanders, "Now you're a domestic terrorist" and, "We're adding you to our database." I am concerned that if I were to call 911 and say "Armed, masked, men have broken into my preschool facility" or "Armed masked men have abducted someone at my preschool", Maine state police would simply tell me that they can't do anything about it because they can't interfere with federal police. I'm worried that this law wouldn't be enforceable by state law enforcement. I fear that saying "I'm sorry, under Maine law LD 2106 I'm not permitted to let you in" could result in me or one of my fellow preschool teachers being the next Alex Petti.

So though I support this law, I hope each member of this legislature understands the moment that we are in and treats it with the seriousness it deserves.