

LD 2106 TESTIMONY
JANUARY 29, 2026

Hello. My name is Mary Hunter, I have lived in Lewiston since 1979. I volunteer as an English conversation teacher at Lewiston Adult Ed and as a string teacher in the Lewiston schools.

Because of both my volunteer positions, I come into contact with a small segment of the immigrant populations of Lewiston/Auburn, and what I am seeing even among the few people I know is heartbreaking and appalling. All classes at Lewiston Adult Ed are radically down in numbers — people are frightened to come and do the things that the right wing has until recently routinely insisted that they don't do enough of — learn English and work to support themselves. At least one younger student I teach — a star athlete and musician — is locked in their house with their family, unable to buy groceries.

The places that LD 2106 would protect — schools, daycares, hospitals, libraries, etc — are places where people do the most fundamental human activities — learn, heal, satisfy their curiosity, and get integrated into the social world they find themselves in. Immigrants' need for these services are as urgent as mine or yours. If the majority of us want a society with the largest possible number of fully functioning members, regardless of where they come from, we must ensure that the public institutions that most actively help people function fully be safe for everyone who uses them.

Finally, it must be terrifying to be a teacher, school administrator, hospital staff person, or librarian these days. Passing this bill will not remove the jolt of fear when a bunch of armed, masked men bang on the door, but it does provide both clarity and legal backup when these workers refuse them entry or demand to see valid paperwork. I urge you in the strongest terms to support it. Thank you.

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