



January 29, 2026

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United Way  
of Southern Maine



Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Annika Moore, and I am the Advocacy Team Leader at Preble Street. The mission of Preble Street is to provide accessible, barrier-free services to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty, and to advocate for solutions to these problems.

On behalf of Preble Street, I am here today in emphatic support of LD 2106, which would restrict federal immigration enforcement from entering hospitals, libraries, daycares, and schools without a judicial warrant. These locations serve as critical, front-line resources for hundreds of individuals and families we serve. By restricting ICE's access to these places which offer safety and community, we can ensure that everyone is able to utilize these basic services without fear.

As we have seen in recent days and weeks, surges of indiscriminate federal immigration enforcement impact all of us: healthcare workers and teachers feel unsafe going to work, individuals avoid seeking critical medical treatment out of fear, and students stay home from school. These disruptions slow down our economy, interrupt student learning, and put people's health at risk. If a large number of ICE agents remain in our state, residents will continue to limit their daily activities, and the harm to our state's economy and well-being will continue to grow. LD 2106 would mitigate some of these impacts by prohibiting ICE from accessing sensitive locations that people rely on to meet their basic needs.

At Preble Street, we see firsthand the vital role that libraries, hospitals, and schools play in the lives of individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness. Libraries provide warmth and shelter during the day, in addition to being a resource for internet and information access, which allow people to connect with housing and employment. Hospitals often operate as many individuals' sole source of healthcare, treating frostbite and injuries, mental health and substance use emergencies, and life-threatening illnesses. If a person experiencing homelessness views these locations as unsafe, they may stay outside or avoid treatment—choices that could be harmful or even deadly depending on the circumstances.

Schools offer consistency and support for many of the at-risk and homeless youth we serve. Some of these clients are unaccompanied asylum-seekers who arrive in Maine alone, knowing little English, having fled geopolitical turmoil in their home country, and often having experienced excruciatingly traumatic events during their journey. When students avoid school out of fear, they may lose touch with trusted language instructors, guidance counselors, and social networks. In addition, they may experience greater food insecurity because they are no longer eating at school. This has the potential to further traumatize these young people while also interfering with their ability to build healthy, productive lives as Maine residents. Preble Street urges you to vote in favor of LD 2106 and remove a barrier to potentially life-saving services for individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty.

We have heard of a proposal to include churches and other places of worship in the list of sensitive locations covered by this legislation. Many places of worship provide

food and other critical services to individuals and families experiencing poverty, in addition to operating as social and spiritual support systems. For these reasons, we would be in favor of any amendment adding these locations to LD 2106.

Over the past week and a half, it has become clear that federal immigration enforcement operations are putting Maine's immigrant community, as well as the entire state, at unnecessary and unwarranted risk. LD 2106 is a sensible policy that protects our neighbors as they learn, work, and seek medical treatment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.