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**MEJ Testimony *supporting* LD 2106, An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review**

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Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dina Malual and I am a Policy Advocate with Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), a nonprofit civil legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine.

We strongly support LD 2106, a proactive bill that protects immigrants by prohibiting immigration enforcement's access to schools, hospitals, libraries and child care facilities. As ICE swarms Maine and threatens the safety of the immigrant community, we must ensure enforcement is consistent with the Constitution. We must also ensure it does not keep individuals and families from accessing vital spaces that are necessary for learning, health, and work.

MEJ is a founding member of the Peer Workforce Navigator Network (PWN) – a coalition of six organizations across the state – including immigrant-led organizations – who together connect diverse Mainers to stable jobs and economic opportunities. ICE's increased and unlawful activity in our state is contrary to these goals.

LD 2106 is a call for accountability, explicitly stating ICE must have a valid **judicial** warrant to conduct enforcement. It provides guidance to teachers, health care workers, childcare providers, and librarians, ensuring they have clear information from the state about what to do should federal agents show up at their workplace. In work sessions, we hope this committee can think about how to extend this protection to other spaces like places of worship and state or municipal offices.

Under the current administration, immigration enforcement is aggressive and indiscriminate, and thousands of immigrants who are vital to Maine communities and workforce are at risk. According to a recent report from the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), immigrants in Maine account for 4% percent of the state's population, and 84% of children in immigrant households

are U.S citizens.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, data from the Maine Department of Labor shows that in-migration of workers is one of the only ways to address workforce shortages.<sup>2</sup> Through the Peer Workforce Navigator network, we've connected hundreds of immigrant workers to jobs in health care and education. But immigration enforcement further exacerbates labor shortages. Anecdotally, a public health director at an area hospital shared that on just one shift over 200 people had to call out on the first day of the ICE surge. Not only does this fear limit immigrant's access to health care, it compromises the quality of care all patients receive if nurses, doctors, food, or environmental services staff cannot safely come to work. At schools, children lose weeks of instruction and social support, and all students are less safe when teachers, ed techs, or recess aids miss work or are detained for just trying to get to work, as we saw happen this week.<sup>3</sup>

Burden has fallen entirely on community members to avoid deportation; non-citizens are being told to shelter in place, even citizens are being told to carry their passports. As such, the past two weeks, immigrants have been absent from so many aspects of community life. MEJ has observed increased mistrust from clients who are scared to access safety net resources and agencies that assist with basic or emergency needs. Individuals are delaying necessary medical care. We have had to cancel in-person workforce and legal clinics, and received reports that attendance has drastically dropped at Maine CareerCenters in Portland, meaning that the workers our state desperately needs are not getting connected to workforce opportunities that help people lead independent lives and support our economy. LD 2106 would add a layer of security that some public spaces would be more safe from ICE's overreach.

LD 2106 provides assurance for immigrants and arms public employees with tools to keep their workplaces safer by:

1. Providing guidance and clarity to workers in public spaces
2. Protecting due process and strengthens constitutional rights
3. Preserving public spaces for all

For these reasons, we ask that the Joint Standing Committee of Judiciary support LD 2106. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am happy to answer any questions and can be available for any work sessions.

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<sup>1</sup>Lacarte, Valerie and Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh. 2025. Maine's Immigrant Communities: Diverse Origins, Characteristics, and Challenges. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>2</sup> August 2024, Maine Department of Labor / CWRI, "Maine's Changing Labor Market" Report, <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/sites/maine.gov.labor.cwri/files/files/documents/ChangingLaborMarket.pdf>, Accessed March 2025

<sup>3</sup> Portland Press Herald, Rose Lundy (2026, January 21). Mother of 4 detained in Portland as immigration enforcement ramps up in Maine. *Portland Press Herald*. Retrieved January 29, 2026, from <https://www.pressherald.com/2026/01/21/mother-of-4-detained-in-portland-as-immigration-enforcement-ramps-up-in-maine/>