

1/29/2026

Good afternoon,

My name is Emma Wynne Hill and I'm a licensed clinical social worker who has been working in the social work field for almost 20 years. I am here to ask each of you to vote yes on LD 2106.....I've worked in just about every corner of the field, with so many populations, but today I'm going to speak about children.

When I learned that there would be an opportunity to speak here I spent a lot of time thinking about how to approach explaining how damaging the fear of displacement currently circulating in our society is for the young body. How the idea of ICE agents in schools and hospitals and libraries made me so profoundly afraid for humanity's direction. I wondered how I could possibly fit in all the research information I wanted to about the effects of trauma on children when they don't have a single place to decompress, to be off guard. I thought about giving you examples of how this kind of experience on the young, still developing brain, can cause lifelong disruption in all their most vital systems, how it can make the feeling of trust register as a threat due to safety consistently being violated. Think of those repercussions.

Eventually, though, I realized that the most valuable thing I could share would be one of the lessons I've learned from some of my youngest clients, and that I carry with me every day in the attempt to maintain hope that the future may hold something better.

I have had the immense honor of working with and being trusted by dozens of deeply traumatized children during the course of my career. Over and over, I've learned from them that just one safe place with one adult who trusts, nurtures, and shelters them can make or break their outcomes. I know, in my heart, that if I can be that for them when we are meeting together, their chances of thriving go up. I have also learned that I can't assume that that one person is not me. We can't assume someone else will do it. The stakes are too high. I don't have any delusion that this bill is going to stop families from being separated, from kids worrying that their parents won't be there when they get off the bus, and it is profoundly damning to our society as a whole that we find ourselves where we are right now, begging for the most basic safety in our public spaces to be preserved. That is a scrap, but it's one that we are tasked with fighting for

because so many institutions, so many individuals, have decided that the safety of ourselves, our neighbors, our collective children, is a nuisance and that its not their problem. What I, what we, are asking of you each, individually today, is to take on being that one person- if you cant do it for adults that maybe dont look like you, that you don't find alignment with or responsibility towards, do it for the kids in school today wondering if they're safe. All children are our children, their safety is all of our responsibility and they need each of us to act as though no one else will.

I am asking you as a mental health professional, an auntie and meemaw to many, and a fellow Mainer- vote YES on LD 2106, because its the right thing to do.

Thank you,
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