

Jan. 29, 2026

Thank you, Senator Carney, Representative <sup>Kuhn</sup>~~Gatineau~~, and members of the committee. My name is Tom Berry and I'm a retired speech-language pathologist and I'm here to support the passage of LD 2106.

For most of my 30 year career, I worked at all levels in the Kennebunk schools - from pre-K to high school. Over my final years there, I participated in a fair number of armed intruder lock-down drills and I know first hand of the subliminal sense of unease many students carry daily. However remote the threat to their lives might be on any given day, this wary sense is ever-present and ready to surface.

Today, in addition to having underlying trepidation about being in school because of the possibility that they could be murdered, our students who have dark skin or whose parents have foreign accents now also have agents of our own government to fear. It's bad enough that squads of heavily armed masked men can show up any day outside of their schools ready to kidnap their parents. The possibility that these bounty hunters could enter their school and access confidential records to facilitate their predatory actions compounds the threat.

Maine's Department of Education website includes in its vision statement the principle that our schools will provide "learning environments that are safe and supportive for all." Protection of confidential records from unlawful government intrusion should be an obvious and automatic policy that is upheld by all. It is a sad commentary on the current situation that codifying this protection should be necessary - and yet, here we are.

I suggest that the bill be amended to include assisted living communities. Like nursing homes and hospitals, assisted living residences often employ foreign workers. I can attest to this since I currently have a part-time job washing dishes at such a facility. It doesn't matter that these employees have documents that allow them to legally work here. We've all seen how ICE and Border Patrol agents routinely detain and abuse or abduct persons solely because they do not look or speak like most of us here. And they do this with impunity, whether their targets are documented or not.

Having this bill become law would at least partially alleviate the high anxiety my foreign-born coworkers are experiencing.

These folks are not murderers. They are not rapists. They are not fentanyl peddlers. **They** are not "the worst of the worst."

LD 2106 does not address all of the areas of need that have been created by this inhumane action by this Administration. However, it is incumbent upon state lawmakers to use every tool at their disposal to provide relief where possible.

And so, again, I urge that you vote "Ought to Pass" for this measure.

Thank you all for considering this testimony