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Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Amy Partridge-Barber. I am a resident of Carrabassett Valley. I come to you today to urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2106.

I have been a Clinical Social Worker in Maine for over 30 years. I have worked with families from Strong to Sanford. Uncertainty, isolation, and fear are not new to the families I support. We are a rural state in a cold climate. We all know the unique costs and challenges which come with living here. Many of us work long hours for low wages. Many of our children know what its like to go to bed hungry or cold or alone, or all three. Whether your family has been here for generations or just a few years, if you live in Maine you know what it is like to work hard. And maybe you don't even mind. There is something satisfying about building a life and sustaining a family. But in the end, the thing that gets families through the tough stuff is one another.

Though we may try, we do not survive, and we certainly do not thrive when we go it alone. It is neighbors who get us through snowstorms and fires and floods. It is family and friends who step in when a parent can't leave work to be home with a sick child. It is friends who help fold laundry and cook dinner when you can't get out of bed because you lost your job or a loved one.

At this very moment in Maine we find ourself in a new kind of tough. Our communities are under threat by federal policies founded in malice and retribution which, let us not forget, are being funded by our taxes. Our neighbors, friends and family members need us to act swiftly. Alone we may feel powerless and afraid. But together we can do something. Laws can be written, enacted, and enforced, which keep our people safe from being terrorized without reason and abducted without cause.

LD 2106 establishes public buildings where children and adults can find safe passage; schools, libraries, day cares, doctors offices. If we find we need to write into laws more protections. we shall. This is what our

democracy is for. I encourage each of us to find the courage to lead in some small way so that together we may hold our communities close in a time of threat.

Leadership is made up of thousand small steps in the direction of justice. Leadership is who we are as a state. Maine has the North Star on her flag for a reason. The Latin word Dirigo means "I lead." "I guide." Since Latin, the language of the Romans, was a bit heavy on the hierarchy, perhaps we make one small modern edit; "We lead." "We guide." Who we are is defined by how we act. Let us use this moment to be the guiding leaders we strive to be.

In closing, I am grateful for your courage to write this bill and for your willingness to listen and act. I ask you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2106.

Amy Partridge-Barber, MSW, LCSW
Carrabassett Valley