

TESTIMONY FROM AIDAN SITES [LEEDS] IN SUPPORT OF LD 2106

Good afternoon,

My name is Aidan Sites, and I currently live in Leeds Maine, about halfway between Augusta and Lewiston. I grew up here in Augusta though, right up the road from where we stand now. I attended Lincoln Elementary School, walking to school every morning and back every afternoon. I often walked to Lithgow Public Library with my brother and mom. When my younger brother finished elementary school at Lincoln, he would walk to middle school at St. Michaels down the street. As we walked to these places, we would say polite hello to neighbors as we passed by them gardening in their yards. As I grew up and began middle school and high school myself, I volunteered every summer at Maine General Medical Center.

I share these small anecdotes about my childhood here in Maine as a reminder. A reminder to any of those of us in this room who are proud Mainers, of what it means to be a Mainer. Being a Mainer means feeling safe to enter places of learning and healing. It means feeling safe to walk down the street, to look at the sky and breathe the fresh air, without fear that we will be seized by masked individuals into an unmarked car. It means taking care of your neighbors. Mainers are good neighbors, we are kind and caring; that is the kind of Mainer I was raised to be, like I know so many of you were as well.

Our state and our country is now in a terrifying yet pivotal moment. What we do today shapes our future. What you all on the committee do today shapes the future that we want and will build for our state and for our communities. We all need to stand with moral clarity in this moment. We need to have our neighbors backs, we need to have New Mainers' backs, we need to have immigrants' backs. I want to live in a world where parents feel safe sending their children to school, bringing their children to a library or a daycare or a healthcare facility without fear. I want to live in a world where my future children are not scared to go to school, scared to enter the learning spaces where they are supposed to feel safest. Ensuring this world and this future, that is our duty, that is your duty as our elected officials. Making safe spaces free from the terrifying acts of ICE personnel is the bare minimum we can do at this moment.

Lastly I want to finish my testimony by sharing a reminder for us all: **unless you are indigenous to this land, we are all immigrants or descended from immigrants.** Let's not forget that.

Solidarity is a verb. I'll repeat: **solidarity is a verb.**

Protecting our communities, and especially the most vulnerable members of our communities such as children, is something that requires action, now.

Support LD2106. Protect immigrants in Maine as they access the rights of education, healthcare, childcare, and beyond.

Support LD2106 now, and continue to protect the most recent immigrants in our communities for years to come.

Thank you.