
Testimony in Support of LD 2106

An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Nicole Lemay, and I am a resident of Lewiston but most importantly the proud granddaughter of immigrants. I am writing today in strong support of LD 2106. Rather than repeat information you already know, or restate the well-documented impacts that ICE practices are having on our communities, I want to share a few short stories.

My grandparents immigrated to Lewiston nearly 100 years ago. My grandmother often told stories of working at Bates Mill at just 13 years old and being treated poorly because she was not born here. My father was five years old when he learned to speak English and was disciplined by nuns for mispronouncing words. When my brother and I heard these stories growing up, we laughed in disbelief.

Many years later, I now serve as the Executive Director of a nonprofit organization that supports youth in this same community. I live and work near the mills where my grandmother once labored. I am also a neighbor and a friend to families who are currently being impacted by the harmful practices of ICE.

Each morning, I walk my dog, Chance, past a local bus stop. The neighborhood children adore him and are always excited to say hello and give him a quick pat. There are usually eight or nine children waiting there. When ICE came to our city, that bus stop was suddenly missing many children, all children of color. No child in our community should be afraid to go to school.

One eight-year-old girl in particular has grown very fond of me. We bonded over my dog and what she is learning in school, and she has made me nearly forty bracelets. She has a teenage sister who knows I will laugh when she teases her brother. She has a five-year-old brother who loves to play tag and play in the pool. The baby of the family is about six months old — a chunky little guy. These are the families being impacted by lawlessness.

Last week, I was driving several of the youth I work with to an educational event outside of Lewiston. I asked if they felt safe traveling. One responded, "Yeah, I have my passport." These were 14- and 15-year-old children, born in the United States. One of them noticed a tear roll down my cheek and reassured me that they were okay and felt safe. Safety should not come in the form of a document that most Americans only carry when leaving the country.

I urge this committee to take action and help change the potential path of destruction unfolding in Maine. LD 2106 is a necessary step toward protecting our communities, our children, and the values we claim to uphold.

Thank you for your time and consideration.