

February 10, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Bella Sturtevant and I am a resident of Leeds. I am speaking today in support of LD 2176: An Act to Create a Right to Judicial Review Under the Maine Civil Rights Act for Persons Erroneously Detained. This bill stands up for Mainers' rights by making it clear that if someone is unlawfully detained during an immigration enforcement action, they can fight back to recover damages and attorney fees under Maine's Civil Rights Act. It also would help Maine residents detained in federal immigration detention have access to a lawyer. Mainers deserve fairness, accountability, and justice—and that means holding law enforcement to those same values.

As a political science major at Thomas College, I believe protecting our civil liberties is essential to maintaining a strong, pluralistic democracy. Ensuring that no single group is more powerful than another is what is at the heart of a healthy democracy. Our founding fathers embraced shared power because they understood that limited government is the best safeguard against abuse and the erosion of individual rights. Here in Maine, every one of us has the right to due process, and LD 2176 reinforces that promise, ensuring it cannot be infringed upon.

As a proud Mainer, I deeply respect our local law enforcement and their accountability that builds public trust. I simply want federal immigration officers held to that same standard of due process. That commitment to fairness and accountability is what makes me proud to call Maine home, and LD 2176 strengthens those values.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to please support LD 2176, and ensure that our communities' rights are being upheld and protected by federal immigration enforcement.