

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

## LD 2212

*An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations  
for the Expenditures of State Government, FY2026–2027*

**Submitted to:** Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

**Committee Co-Chairs:** Senator Margaret Rotundo and Representative Drew Gattine

**Public Hearing:** February 19, 2026, 9:00 AM

**Submitted by:** Marpheen Chann, Cumberland County Resident

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Marpheen Chann, and I am a resident of Cumberland County. I write today in support of LD 2212 and to urge this committee to strengthen the bill's commitment to state and local government partnerships — including by addressing a critical fiscal gap that, if left unresolved, will fall squarely on the property taxpayers of Maine's counties.

First, I want to commend Governor Mills for investments in this supplemental budget that recognize the essential partnership between state and local government. Provisions like the Code Enforcement Officer Resource Management Coordinator and the AI Partnership Program for municipalities are exactly the kind of practical, capacity-building support that helps local governments deliver services more effectively. The Housing Opportunity Program's regionalized building code enforcement pilot, the SNAP contingency fund, and support for indigent legal defense are further evidence that this budget takes seriously the downstream relationship between state policy and local fiscal health. I encourage this committee to protect and build on these provisions.

But I ask the committee to go further and address a gap the bill does not yet fill: direct support for counties navigating fiscal transitions driven by community values and public policy priorities.

Specifically, I want to speak to a situation unfolding in Cumberland County. Our County Commissioners are being asked — by community advocates, by the direction of public values, and increasingly by the weight of practical and fiscal argument — to end the Cumberland County Jail's contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house federal detainees. I believe ending that contract is the right decision. But I also believe in being direct about the fiscal consequences: that contract generates revenue that currently helps offset the cost of operating the jail. When it ends, the county will face a budget shortfall that, without state assistance, will be passed on to county property taxpayers — people already stretched by rising assessments and the rising cost of living in Greater Portland and across Cumberland County.

This is not an argument against ending the ICE contract. It is an argument that the State of Maine has a responsibility to help counties manage the fiscal consequences of making principled decisions. If we want local governments to reflect Maine values — including disentangling our public institutions from federal immigration enforcement — then the state

should not leave counties financially stranded when they act on those values. The burden should not be quietly transferred to a property tax bill.

I urge this committee to use LD 2212 as a vehicle for one or both of the following:

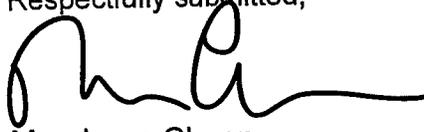
**1. Transitional funding:** Provide direct state funding to offset revenue losses for counties that discontinue detention contracts with federal immigration authorities, helping bridge the gap during budget restructuring without raising the county tax rate.

**2. A directed study on state-county fiscal partnership:** Direct a relevant state agency or legislative committee to conduct a comprehensive study of how Maine can better support county governments fiscally — examining revenue tools, cost-sharing arrangements, and transitional funding mechanisms — and return to the Legislature with actionable recommendations. The fiscal pressures facing Cumberland County around the ICE contract are one example of a broader challenge: counties across Maine are regularly asked to absorb the consequences of state and federal policy shifts with no dedicated relief mechanism. A study of this scope would serve every county in Maine, not just one.

Maine's counties do essential and unglamorous work — running jails, courthouses, registries, and emergency management systems — with narrow revenue tools and little flexibility. The supplemental budget is an opportunity to send a clear message: that when counties make the right calls on behalf of their residents, the State of Maine will stand behind them fiscally. Doing the right thing should not mean a higher tax bill for the people who can least afford it.

Thank you for your time, your service to the people of Maine, and your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Marpheen Chann

Cumberland County Resident

Submitted: February 19, 2026