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MEJ Testimony in *opposition* to LD 1656, An Act to Facilitate Compliance with Federal Immigration Law by State and Local Government Entities

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Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dina Malual and I am a Policy Advocate with Maine Equal Justice (MEJ), a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine. Today we are testifying in opposition to LD 1656.

LD 1656 prohibits local government entities from adopting policies that would limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. This bill also encourages local government entities to comply with federal agencies, blurring the lines between state and federal responsibilities.

At a time where people are being detained, questioned and even harassed simply for existing, requiring cooperation between local and federal law enforcement will not keep Mainers safe. Local law entities are given authorization to serve in their jurisdiction and we should not encourage nor support policies that complicate this.

In situations where public safety is at risk, we should have faith that local law enforcement agencies will use their judgement to determine how the law should be enforced. According to law, federal law agencies would already be involved if the situation requires it.

We should not be supporting policies that target specific groups, and should continue to object to legislation that seek to blur the responsibilities between local and federal law entities.

For these reasons, we ask that the committee reject LD 1656.