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Georgetown
LD 1259

I would like my testimony to be submitted in support of both LD1259 and LD1971 .

I humbly address you in several capacities: As a professional human rights and legal expert; as a former immigrant who became a U.S. citizen in Portland, Maine in 1978; and as a Palestinian-American. I urge you to please move both legislative drafts under discussion today forward for consideration and adoption.

When I swore allegiance to the United States of America, I swore to protect the Constitution and to respect the rule of law. I was tested on the institutional and judicial protection of American individual and collective freedoms enshrined in our democracy's checks and balances system, respect for individual rights and due process and especially habeas corpus. Although these protections have not always operated flawlessly or effectively, what we are seeing today from the Trump Administration's trashing of all of those proud traditions should be ringing alarm bells everywhere.

Nowhere is this more evident than the administration's cruel and unlawful rounding up, detention and cruel rendition of migrants and permanent residents without any of these protections or due process. Any disputes over legal status should be adjudicated in a court of law, with all due protections and rights to be heard and to defend oneself. Maine should not be a willing participant in this shredding of democracy, and to this serious threat to law and to individual freedoms. The State of Maine should NOT cooperate with any individual or body, including federal agencies, in any action or behavior that violates those fundamental principles that our State and our Union are built upon.

I would also like to add that as a Palestinian-American-Mainer, this touches me personally and very deeply. I have always felt safe and protected in Maine throughout my 48 years of citizenship. However, the unpredictability of this administration's unlawful actions, targeted specifically against any pro-Palestinian speech, has for the first time put this safety in question, for me and my family.

I was proud of Maine when Governor Janet Mills retorted to Donald Trump with the words "I'll see you in court!" Let's all continue to be proud of Maine by refusing to cooperate with unlawful behavior, or to bow to intimidation and coercion. Let's hold on to the rule of law for dear life. These legislative drafts will help us do that.