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LD 1971

My name is Lisa Belanger and I am a resident of North Yarmouth. I am testifying in support of LD 1971. I think we all would agree that Maine law enforcement's responsibilities are not those of Homeland Security. We need to be certain that members of our law enforcement are not taking action against friends and neighbors in Maine if that action is not directed at someone who is doing something against the law. Based on what we have seen in other states, people who were saying things that were not acceptable to this Administration were being arrested and imprisoned solely on the basis of their protest. They were not breaking the law. We are also hearing that people of uncertain immigration status have been sent to offshore prisons without due process. The constitution's guarantees of due process and equal protection apply to everyone in the United States, regardless of immigration status. We must assure that these violations in human rights do not happen in Maine.

We are better than that. And, as we know, our immigrant neighbors are an important contributor to our Maine economy.

Additionally, given the current challenges with funding, we need our law enforcement to stay focused on Maine. All people in Maine need to be supported in seeking safety, health, and educational opportunities, so law enforcement, health care facilities, and schools must remain spaces they can access without fear of retaliation. Failure to maintain basic access would have catastrophic impacts on public safety and public health.

Thank you in advance for supporting this modest but important legislation.

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