

Craig Bramley
Portland
LD 1259

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Portland, Maine
May 19, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Craig Bramley. I'm a resident of Portland and writing to you in support of LD 1259.

I am an attorney with 29 years of experience practicing in Maine. My experience has taught me two things that relate to LD 1259 - that working with witnesses to prove a case is difficult under the best of circumstances and that the choices we make on allocation of resources have large impacts over time.

As federal pressure to increase 287(g) agreements between ICE and local law enforcement grows, we will see profound impacts on the operation of our state courts. These courts should be open to all. Securing justice in both criminal and civil cases depends on the availability of witnesses. When local law enforcement is deputized to help ICE, trust for local officers and cooperation decreases. Victims, plaintiffs, and witnesses concerned about their immigration status will avoid the court system out of fear of being taken into a system in which due process is no longer available. We have already seen arrests inside courthouses in other states and I have spoken with Maine judges who know that people appearing in their courtrooms will be arrested outside after a hearing. We must do anything we can to avoid a future in which the arrest of U.S. residents in Maine courthouses is the norm. LD 1259 is on way to preserve the independence of Maine law enforcement.

My other concern about 287(g) agreements is that they will divert law enforcement resources from the priorities established in our communities to those of the President and federal government. Despite rhetoric stating that the most dangerous criminals would be removed by ICE, we have seen heartbreaking scenes of grandmother's being snatched from the street and parents taken away while their children are left alone. These actions are not consistent with the efforts of Maine's law enforcement community to allocate limited resources to providing us with safe, welcoming communities. If 287(g) agreements spread throughout the state, we will see more and more time and resources allocated to ICE priorities and less attention to public safety. We will regret this outcome.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1259. Thank you.