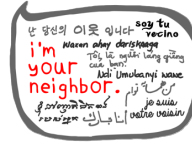


I'm Your Neighbor Books
80 Bell St., Ste. 7
Portland, ME 04103
ImYourNeighborBooks.org



Written Testimony in Support of [LD 1259 An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement](#) and [LD 1971 An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities](#)

Submitted by: Kirsten Cappy, Executive Director, I'm Your Neighbor Books

Date: May 18, 2025

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

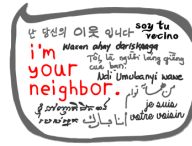
I am writing to express my strong support for **LD 1259** ([An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement](#)) and **LD 1971** ([An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities](#)).

As the Executive Director of the nonprofit I'm Your Neighbor Books, which works with schools to build belonging for not only immigrant students but all students throughout Maine, I have heard firsthand how ICE actions have negatively affected the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn. Educators have reached out to I'm Your Neighbor Books with requests for books that might explain to all their students what is happening in their communities.

Local ICE activity and the threat of possible ICE activity has created a state of fear for immigrant students and families. Teachers have reported students missing school and, when they are in school, they are often too anxious to learn. The right for all immigrant students to be educated is a legal and moral principle upheld in the United States, ensuring that, regardless of immigration status, all children have access to a public education. This right is rooted in the landmark Supreme Court case [Plyler v. Doe](#) and is further supported by the [14th Amendment](#), which guarantees equal protection under the law. Plyler v. Doe is useless if ICE creates an atmosphere of fear that keeps immigrant students from attending school and/or being in an emotional state to learn. I'm Your Neighbor Books has sent boxes of books to Maine teachers to drop at student's homes, homes that their students have not left for fear of family separation.

Local ICE activity and the threat of possible ICE activity has created an atmosphere of anxiety and distraction for educators. Across Maine, classroom teaching has been interrupted with rumors or actual reports of ICE activity.

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One elementary teacher reported that colleagues alerted her while she was preparing for the day to say ICE was in the neighborhood. The teacher, who has one of the school's few immigrant students, was deeply concerned about what might happen to the student and family she had built a rapport with. The student's residence was viewable from the classroom windows and while teaching, she spent the day anxiously watching to see if ICE would appear.

One middle-school multilingual teacher reported her class coming to a standstill when her students' phones lit up with rumors that immigrant students at the neighboring high school had been taken by ICE. The teacher had to stop her lesson to research the claims. In the end, she had to ask her principal to verify or debunk the rumors with the high school principal so the day could move forward. In both instances, education as a whole was diminished because of ICE activity.

LD 1259 and LD 1971 both address the need for a separation between local officials and federal border and immigration agents. This separation would allow immigrant families to understand that *they are safe* with town and state officials. Maine has welcomed families of all immigrant statuses, and schools, especially, have built trust with them. Your support for LD 1259 and LD 1971 will validate and reinforce that welcome and trust. LD 1259 and LD 1971 are not only crucial to immigrant families, but also to everyone in schools and in the broader community who respects a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment.

Thank you for your attention and for your commitment to the well-being of *all* our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kirsten Cappy".

Kirsten Cappy
Executive Director
I'm Your Neighbor Books
kcappy@imyourneighborbooks.org