

Christopher Cayer
Stratton
LD 1259

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Chris Cayer, I live in Stratton, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971.

For the past few months, I've been watching in anger and disbelief as thousands of people across the country have been detained by masked men and deported without due process. I've seen agents barging into people's homes, smashing car windows, and stripping children from their parents. I've seen people who are in this country legally picked up off the street for expressing their first amendment right. No police agencies in Maine should be allowed to participate in these immoral, illegal and unconstitutional actions.

Nor do they want to. 287 agreements divert critical resources away from state and local policing. There were a few bills before the Maine Legislature in 2021 (LD 1378 & LD 1340) that tried to force local police departments to coordinate with ICE. Representatives from law enforcement testified that they strongly oppose such practices, saying that local law enforcement agencies have limited resources and should not be burdened to enforce federal laws. 287 agreements are expensive! There are numerous examples of 287 arrangements that have cost municipalities and towns millions of dollars to implement and maintain.

I also want to note the impact that these collaborations can have on our local economy and institutions. We have a small workforce in Maine. Did you know that there are 32,200 immigrant workers in this state? That's nearly 5% of our total labor force. They do hard jobs, they're entrepreneurial, they pay taxes, and they're good neighbors.

More importantly, this is a threat to public safety. 287 arrangements have a chilling effect on reporting crime. When people don't trust police, they're less likely to report issues that affect everyone in a community.

I want to thank the committee for bringing this bill forward today. I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have.

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