

Catherine Cyrus
Brunswick
LD 1259

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary.

I write to urge you to vote in support of LD 1259: An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement. This bill would prohibit state or local law enforcement agencies or officers from entering agreements to assume federal immigration enforcement authority or powers.

As a Brunswick resident I work with other Brunswick residents to assure the welfare of the new Mainers in our community. Some of our new neighbors have suffered arbitrary and brutal treatment in their countries of origin at the hands of police forces under the control of corrupt government regimes. It is critically important that these folks have a better experience as they build new lives among us. I believe it keeps everyone safer when all community members feel they can approach the police without fear if they are victims of a crime or have witnessed a crime. I am very concerned that federal and local law enforcement be kept separate for this reason. On a strictly practical level Maine law enforcement is not trained in the complex and changing area of immigration law nor do they have the capacity to add Federal Law enforcement into their job description.

For our newly settled new Mainers, an unbiased criminal justice system and police focused on public safety are concepts they will only come to trust slowly. They are eager to work and contribute to our communities. They are vital members of our economy who do hard jobs, start businesses and pay taxes. They bring their energy and vibrant culture to enrich our aging communities. Most basically, they are human beings with constitutional rights.

Please vote in support of LD 1259 to assure the safety of all of us as we work together to build a stronger and more vital community together.

Thank you,
Catherine Cyrus
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