

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Aoife Dowd, I'm a resident of Portland, and I am **writing to testify in favor of both LD 1259 and LD 1971.**

I'm writing today as a first generation American and a proud child of immigrants. I know first hand how vital immigrants are to our communities. My parents are everything you hear about immigrants- hard workers, contributing members of their communities, kind and caring people willing to sacrifice for their families. And while my parents are wonderful, I know that they are no more deserving of the lives they've had than any other immigrant to this country. But because my parents are white Europeans, native English speakers- they were able to forge a path towards citizenship and immigration that many don't have the privilege, safety or resources to access. It is my responsibility as a person with this great privilege to advocate for those who have not had the same experience, but ultimately want the same thing my parents did when they immigrated some 40+ years ago, a better life.

The current administration seeks to enact cruelty on our most vulnerable communities across the country. Ripping apart families, detaining legal residents, deporting children with cancer. I fear we still don't know the entirety of the terror ICE has and will continue to carry out if left unchecked. Any collaboration with ICE contributes to the racist, xenophobic agenda of this administration. These bills are vital as they ensure that law enforcement, health care facilities, and schools will remain spaces that immigrants and their families can access without fear of retaliation. It ensures that *everyone* in Maine feels safe, no matter who they are.

The constitution guarantees due process and equal protection for everyone in the United States, regardless of immigration status. We've seen over the past months here in Maine and nationwide, as traffic stops, protests and simply showing up to work have become a high risk for our immigrant community. These bills ensure that immigrants in Maine will be able to work, provide for their families and show up for their communities without fear.

Immigrants are so incredibly vital to our communities, but most importantly they are human beings who deserve dignity! They are my friends, my neighbors, my parents and they deserve safety and the opportunity for lives free from fear.

I urge you to vote in favor of both LD 1259 and LD 1971. Thank you for your time.