

Adam Hathaway
Portland
LD 1259

Below is a written copy of the testimony presented in person during the public comment session:

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Adam Hathaway, I live in Portland, and I am here to urge your support of both LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Having served several years as a firefighter and EMT, supporting many communities across Maine, there are few things more valuable to me than ensuring the safety of our communities. I believe these bills will do just that.

If we allow local law enforcement and ICE to continue separating people from their families, homes, and communities because of profiling based on their immigration status or suspicions thereof, we do not make our communities safer. We sow fear and distrust, and we tell our neighbors that it is not safe for them to engage with public services or to call 911 when they need help.

I am honored to have responded for hundreds of people on some of the worst days of their lives, and I am indescribably grateful for the social support that allowed them to be able to call for help when they needed it. These spanned fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, mental health crises, and countless other situations where the unifying factor was that somebody needed help and, thanks to a phone call, they received it. I hope you will all consider the ramifications of if those people felt it was not safe for them to call.

Unfortunately, those ramifications are already a reality for many people. As others have testified, it is known that the presence of law enforcement and the inherent threat of detainment and deportation can prevent people from calling for help when they need it. When you call 911, there is no knowing if a police car will arrive alongside that ambulance or fire apparatus, and for many people that would mean their call for help would instead become its own emergency, with potentially life-threatening consequences.

I would like to leave you with a question: If people in our communities feel they cannot call 911 when they need to, are those communities safe?

Thank you for your time and consideration.