

Sam Jenkins
Belfast
LD 1259

Dear Judiciary Committee Members:

I am writing in support of LD1259. Maine police officers and sheriff personnel should focus their attention on enforcing Maine state laws, a mission at which they are currently working overtime, rather than assisting federal immigration officers in enforcement activities that, in many cases, violate immigrants' constitutional rights to due process and equal protection and so render Maine public servants potentially liable for these violations.

Maine is a largely white state, and few of us, I imagine, have been stopped on the street or in a car by a law enforcement officer simply because we looked suspicious, yet this is the daily experience of many Americans, including Mainers, whose skin color marks them as "different." Instead of helping federal authorities terrify immigrants with potential arrest, imprisonment, and deportation, shouldn't Maine be sending the message that they are welcome in our state?

Immigrants do much of the low-wage work in Maine, work that most of us would shun, and their salaries make a significant contribution to Maine's economy, their taxes to the support of state government. If a Mainer needs a taxi to or from the Portland Jetport, they are likely to be driven by an immigrant. Consumers of Maine blueberries are probably eating fruit picked by immigrants. The milk we drink may originate at a Maine dairy farm that relies on immigrant workers. Residents who stay overnight at a Maine hotel can in many cases thank an immigrant for the cleanliness of their room. Many restaurants in popular Maine resort areas would not be open if immigrant labor were not available.

Do we not owe immigrants gratitude for their willingness to work at these jobs? Shouldn't we make it easier rather than more difficult for them to do so? Passage of this important bill would send a clear message that we support immigrants in their willingness to work hard and improve the lives of themselves and their families. I urge you to support LD1259.

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Jenkins
Belfast