

Michael Johnson
Whitefield
LD 1259

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Michael Johnson, I live in Whitefield Maine. Thank you for accepting my testimony in support of bills LD 1259 and LD 1971 to limit the authority of ICE in Maine. ICE contracts are federal government overreach without accountability. They erode trust between local law enforcement and Maine communities, prevent crimes from being reported, and increase racial profiling. Current protocols for engaging with ICE and Border Patrol when felony crimes are committed is appropriate, engaging for any other reason is simply targeting an already marginalized population. We have seen the abuse of power that ICE has shown, the lack of respect for due process. Officers wearing masks, refusing to identify themselves, using violence to detain people they have no warrants to apprehend. We have seen people targeted at schools, work places, hospitals, and places of worship. These are not the actions of an agency that is working for the people or for community safety, but instead to instill fear and sow chaos amongst neighbors. The immigrant community in Maine deserves better, it is our job to protect the rights and dignity of all the people who reside here.

Also, I am concerned that without bills such as these, which seek to clearly layout local officers responsibilities, that we are not adequately protecting our law enforcement. It is unacceptable to force local law enforcement to be thrown into ambiguous legal efforts without clear benefits to the safety of their local community. Not to mention that such contracts may come without adequate training, financing or legal support which will only further divide the communities in which they work.

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