

Amelia Keleher
Portland
LD 1259

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Portland, Maine
May 19, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee.

My name is Amelia Keleher and I reside at 22 Orange St. in Portland. I am writing to urge you to SUPPORT both LD 1259 and LD 1971. It is time to put an end to the collaboration between Sheriff Joyce and ICE. This collaboration not only supports racist and discriminatory policies; it is tearing apart families and communities, spreading fear, and promoting indefinite detention in a system with little to no due process.

All people in Maine deserve access to safety, health, and educational opportunities. Law enforcement, health care facilities, and schools must remain spaces people can access without fear of retaliation. As an advocate who works with currently and formerly incarcerated individuals, I can attest to the harm that occurs in carceral facilities. Conditions at the Cumberland County Jail, like most jails in the U.S., are notoriously poor. Poor nutrition, medical neglect, physical and psychological abuse, and lack of access to basic needs are widespread. People who spend prolonged periods of time in carceral facilities tend to incur numerous detrimental health implications that last long beyond incarceration.

Immigrants in Maine are a critical driver of our state's economy. They do hard jobs, start businesses, and pay taxes. Immigrant spending power in Maine is \$1.7B, and Maine immigrants pay \$625.1M in taxes each year. Tourism, Maine's biggest industry, is heavily dependent on immigrant labor - and on immigrants coming to Maine for vacation. According to a 2016 report, "Immigrants account for almost 10% of workers in travel accommodation."

Detaining people without due process places a significant strain on our tax payer dollars. Funding is already being stretched thin as the Trump administration pursues cuts to programs that are actually keeping people nourished, housed, and safe. In Maine, overtime spending on police has increased by almost 30% over the last 5 years. Our taxpayer dollars should not be funding deportation and incarceration. Instead, resources should go toward supporting programs and services that actually support the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The outcomes of your vote on the bills before the committee today will affect our local business owners, colleagues, neighbors, and friends. As an advocate and local resident, I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my written testimony with the Committee.

Sincerely,
Amelia Keleher