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LD 1971

Greetings to all members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge you to pass LD 1259 and LD 1971 to end Maine's collaboration with ICE. To the committee member who said they have not "seen this issue in Island Falls," I trust that you value individual rights and can understand why immigration enforcement without judicial oversight undermines the bedrock principles of due process and equal protection.

287(g) agreements violate due process by allowing police to act on ICE's unconstitutional administrative warrants—warrants never reviewed by a judge. This turns local officers into deportation agents, eroding trust with not just immigrant communities, but anyone who still somehow has faith in law enforcement. When people fear that calling 911 could lead to family separation, or guilt without proven innocence, we see crimes going unreported, and everyone is less safe. When ICE collaborates with police, workers are less likely to report wage theft or unsafe conditions, which drags down labor standards for everyone.

These programs also waste local resources. Police are already doing too much and being asked to fulfill too many duties—they shouldn't be forced to carry out federal immigration law, a complex system they're wholly untrained to navigate. Worse, these partnerships expose Maine to costly lawsuits when rights are inescapably violated. Why don't we look to invest our limited resources into de-escalation training or mental health first aid for officers instead?

LD 1971's protections for workers and LD 1259's ban on 287(g) agreements are critical to reducing and hopefully preventing racial profiling, keeping families together, and ensuring Maine's resources focus on real public safety—not ICE's cruel and shameful deportation agenda. The legal precedent, as well as the moral and ethical one, is that all humans have a right to due process in this country. We all deserve to feel safe here. We don't need to wait for statistics, we need to prevent government overreach before it's too late.

I stand with countless communities across Maine in demanding an end to these harmful collaborations. As a Mainer myself, I believe our state must reject savagery masquerading as law enforcement. There is a reason we have three branches of government, and voting yes on both bills provides our state with an important check against executive overreach at the federal level and restores local legislative control. Thank you.