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LD 1971

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. I am writing to testify in favor of LD 1259.

Growing up we always started the school day by reciting “One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.” As someone with a degree in religion, I have always been struck by the redundancy of that statement: Christianity, US secular tradition, and every other world religion tells us exactly how to act on the matter of immigration. “Welcome the stranger” is echoed in “give me your tired your poor.” “Love thy neighbor as thyself” in “liberty and justice to all,” and “do unto others as you would have others do unto you” is woven into the very fabric of democracy.

While I recognize the need for a nation to have a functional immigration system, the current actions of ICE raise many questions as to their legality, and no questions whatsoever about their morality: their actions are not welcoming the stranger, nor loving our neighbors as ourselves, nor doing unto others as we would have done unto us. They are violent, they are cruel, they appear to be outside the rule of law or at least making no efforts to demonstrate that they are inside it, and they not only reject the huddled masses, they assault them in masks and affront our democracy by acting with neither transparency nor accountability. This is not liberty and justice for all. This is not safety.

No one is safe in a country where such things occur. And when there is fear of such things, those in need of the systems that keep us safe will avoid using them for fear of opening the doors to ICE’s mercilessness. Any efforts to curtail ICE’s horrific activity and keep it separate from our strong trusting communities bring us towards a more perfect union.

The bedrock of our democracy is the protection of human rights, and these are in jeopardy now. If they fall for one group, they will fall for others, and we will not be safe. We will certainly not be moral. We will not even be a democracy. Our checks and balances exist to protect against just these situations, and if we cannot use them to stand up for the vulnerable, what good will they be to anyone else? I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1259. Thank you for your time, for your good hearts, and for your help to keep our communities safe by keeping ALL of our neighbors safe, too.

Anna