

Mitzi Long Cerjan
Portland
LD 1971

Good Afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee,

I write to you today to offer my strong support for LD 1971, which will clarify and strengthen the duties of State and local law enforcement as they navigate their relationship with federal immigration enforcement.

I am a former employee and current Board Member of Greater Portland Family Promise, a nonprofit that gives vital support to families in danger of homelessness. Family Promise has a strong record of housing placement, food support, counseling, and loving care of families, including immigrants and asylum seekers. In both these roles with Family Promise, I have come to know and admire many immigrant families, especially asylum seekers who have faced threats and physical danger in their birth countries and extreme hardship on their journeys to the United States.

To see through the eyes of these families their hopes for life in the United States has given me renewed hope for justice and generosity in our country and increasing pride in our state, which has treated these newcomers with dignity and respect. I believe that LD 1971 will add another important component to Maine society that reinforces our culture of decency and compassion.

Immigrant families come here to find good lives, raise their families, and work hard to build a better future than they have previously known. They add new life to our workforce, enrich our cultural conversations, and celebrate with us the uniqueness and beauty of life in Maine. They have developed respectful relationships with local law enforcement that helps build the kind of mutual trust that keeps our towns and counties safe.

If our local and State law enforcement officers were to be coerced into cooperation with ICE and other federal officials in the apprehension and illegal removal of immigrants and asylum seekers, the trust they have built with these families and with the broader citizenry of Maine would be seriously eroded. Such coerced actions could have negative psychological consequences for families, the police officers involved, and ordinary residents in our communities. Our trust in our local law enforcement professionals is the bedrock of public safety.

I respectfully urge you to vote in favor of LD 1971 to codify and strengthen the role of Maine law enforcement officers, keep officers and individuals safe from unlawful and cruel federal actions, and reinforce Maine's special place in the nation as a place of decency, community, and care for all. Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
Mitzi Long Cerjan