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LD 1259

TESTIMONY in favor of LD 1259

Immigration reform is needed, because the USA cannot become the relief valve for the burgeoning worldwide population and the migrations caused by environmental and political disasters. One element of a rational immigration policy would include a national “grandfather clause” that protects people who have been allowed to stay in this country for years on end, committing no crimes, whether or not their original arrival was legal. (An analogy would be adverse possession of a right of way.) Another element of a rational immigration policy would be support of worldwide family planning efforts.

But establishing a federal gestapo is profoundly NOT the way to do immigration reform. The ICE raids are both inhumane and unnecessary. I call your attention to a video on youtube which captures a recent ICE raid in Worcester, MA. There, citizens called upon their local police to HELP them deal with an apprehension, but the local force did not appear to know what to do.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMWPh16GgQg>

Our local law enforcement should not be put in a position where they comply with ICE’s brutal treatment of women and children and traumatizing of whole neighborhoods. It would haunt the consciences of our local police for years, especially when they are called upon to assist in a profound mistake, such as happened recently in Oklahoma. We need to backstop our local police by giving them a tool they can use to say NO to ICE. We need to tell our local law enforcement that we, the people, have their backs, and that it is NOT the policy of the State of Maine to assist in the operation of an immoral gestapo force that includes incentives to apprehend an arbitrary quota of victims, violating their due process rights, and making horrendous mistakes.

You have two diametrically opposite bills to consider. One, LD 1656, would REQUIRE local forces to contract with ICE. I have read the testimony that was presented at the public hearing for that bill. 17 people spoke against, and 7 in favor, including a few private citizens who seem to have succumbed to the IRRATIONAL TERROR OF IMMIGRANTS fostered by the Trump Administration in order to further its authoritarian ambitions. On the other hand, there is a TRULY RATIONAL TERROR of those authoritarian ambitions held by those of us standing in favor of LD 1259. This terror is based on an understanding of human history.

Let’s send Maine’s message to the Trump Administration. We are not complying with ICE because of its record of mistakes, its use of quotas, its violation of due process rights, and the fact that there are better, more humane ways of dealing with immigration issues. Maine can, instead, assist with creating rational, humane immigration reforms.