

Nancy Nickerson
Portland
LD 1259

I write today to express my support for related bills LD 1259 and LD 1971. I have been a Portland resident, property owner and taxpayer for over 3 decades. I am alarmed about the recent uptick in apprehensions and detentions of innocent civilians in our city and state, without suspicion of any criminal activity but simply for the opportunity to look into their immigration status. I wish to voice support for bills LD 1259 and 1971. These bills would ban Maine law enforcement agencies from entering into 287(g) agreements with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), and contain other provisions that will clarify and define the relationship between local and federal law enforcement. Rather than improving safety, in the past these types of agreements have served to undermine local public safety, as immigrants fear speaking with the police to give information that could help solve and prevent crimes lest they get arrested in the process. When people don't trust the police, they are less likely to report fraud, domestic violence, workplace violations, and other criminal activity that can make everyone in a community less safe. To quote from a past statement from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, "local police agencies depend on the cooperation of immigrants . . . in solving all sorts of crimes. . . . Without assurances that they will not be subject to an immigration investigation and possible deportation, many immigrants with critical information would not come forward, even when heinous crimes are committed against them or their families." Additionally, participation in these 287 (g) agreements can strain public financial resources, not to mention the human cost to police officers who now have more tasks on their plates and a more demanding workload. For these and several other reasons, I urge a vote in favor of LD 1259 and LD 1971.