

**Joe Niemczura Written testimony for Maine 132<sup>nd</sup> session, LD 1971**

**Judiciary Committee, May 19th 2025**

Dear Chair Carney, Chair Kuhn, and honored Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

My Name is Joe Niemczura and I live in Thorndike, Waldo County. I am submitting written testimony for LD 1971, which would delineate the relationship between Maine State entities and the federal Immigration authorities in their present efforts to kidnap persons and remove them from this country without Due Process of Law or any judicial review.

I am in favor of this bill. In an effort to streamline my remarks, I will only focus on specific issues that I think deserve more attention.

First, one tactic ICE has employed in other states has been to loiter around state-level courthouses in an effort to kidnap immigrants who have business in those courts. I am of the understanding that during COVID many of the court proceedings migrated to tele-hearing such as on Zoom. I do not know if this is current practice, but I strongly suggest that the legislature and court system look into resuming it. Residents have the right to feel safe in the vicinity of any courthouse.

Second, in Belfast RSU 71 the school board was recently asked to consider a contract for I. t. upgrade. As a sidebar to this contract, the school district had to agree to allow I.C.E. unfettered access to student records. the current policy dates back to 2017 (the last time the trump regime was in power). I suggest you consider ways to protect the rights of student and parental control over any such databases now kept at schools and colleges.

I also have some suggestion for language to safeguard safety of citizens in their homes in related issues that apply to everyone not just asylum seekers.

Since the day when LD 1656 testimony was collected, there was an incident in Worcester Massachusetts in which armed, masked people who would not identify themselves forced a nonresisting person in to an unmarked car to take her away. the woman in question was evidently there to help her older daughter with the infant grandchild. Agents wore masks, did not have badges or name tags, and refused to answer questions. the situation amounted to a kidnapping in broad daylight. It was made doubly worse by preventing a grandmother from discharging a family responsibility that is as old as humanity itself – teaching offspring their duty as parents.

the events are documented in an eighteen-minute bystander video, here is the YouTube link: [Neighbors chant, pray as they try to stop ICE from detaining mother | FOX 11 LA](#)

The video does not show what the lady was doing while walking down the street, but It is highly *unlikely* that she was a danger to the public and the ICE agents should have been held to “probable cause” for arrest, which they were not. At the very minimum, the lack of a badge, lack of ID and lack of answers to simple questions, make it difficult to tell the difference between this action and an actual kidnapping. Any idiot can buy themselves a Kevlar vest with “ICE” on it and pretend they are law enforcement.

In subsequent days, ICE justified the kidnapping by saying the woman was said to have a “criminal record for an assault with a deadly weapon” – this was a gross mischaracterization of an incident that took place two days before the kidnapping. She was scheduled for a court appearance in July; therefore even though she was *charged* with an offence, she was not *convicted*. ICE blatantly lied.

Evidently the local government officials (Mayor of Worcester and Police Chief) had told the general public that WPD would not be part of ICE raids, but in this situation in the Massachusetts video, the neighbors outnumbered the ICE agents, and ICE called the Worcester Police Department asking for back up because “a federal agent was surrounded.” The WPD did the only thing they could do, which was send a large squad in response, order those assembled to disperse, and remove additional persons from the scene. the premise of the call was a perfidious lie. the proper response would have been for ICE to withdraw from the vicinity. It is not farfetched to imagine similar scenarios playing in Maine which would result in gunfire from panicked police or angry relatives, leading to deaths of bystanders.

Right now the situation in Maine seems to be that this problem will be addressed department-by-department, or sheriff-by-sheriff. It is very unfortunate that I.C.E. would need to have limits placed on their call for back-up to legitimate law enforcement agencies, but this is the new reality.

The migrants in Maine have been accused of being “freeloaders.” – I read more reports of disappearances taking place around the state and I am not the only one who wonders “if they are freeloaders, why is it that they are being kidnapped on their way to work?”

Maine’s economy depends on tourists from other countries especially Canada, and also on migrant agricultural workers in the potato, broccoli and blue berry industries. I think you need a task force to develop a strategy to address disruptions that are bound to occur.

“When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty” ( attributed to Thomas Jefferson)