

Tighe Blackadar
Bridgton
LD 2106

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary,
My name is Tighe Blackadar and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I operate a private practice in the state of Maine providing mental health and social emotional learning programming to children and families. In addition to my office based work I contract with local public schools to support students in the academic setting, increasing access to these services. I am writing in strong support of LD 2106. I see every day how essential safety, predictability, and trust are to a child's ability to learn and thrive in our schools. Schools must remain places where students feel safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically.

Maine schools serve diverse communities, including refugee families, asylum seekers, and mixed-status households. The presence of immigration enforcement activity in or near schools will have a profound impact on children in that setting including increased stress, fear, and anxiety. When children are in a state of ongoing threat perception, their brains are less able to support learning, memory, and emotional regulation. Children require environments that are predictable and safe in order to grow.

These impacts are not limited to immigrant students; schools support healthy social networks for our youth. Children in schools build strong relationships with their peers and if a child senses they are in danger, that fear spreads quickly through classrooms and school communities, creating unrest and affecting the learning environment for all children. In the school setting these symptoms are likely to result in declining academic performance, behavioral challenges, and withdrawal from peers and staff.

LD 2106 is a necessary bill that protects students by ensuring that Immigration and Customs Enforcement may not enter school grounds or question students without a valid judicial warrant. LD 2106 does not prohibit lawful immigration enforcement but requires that any enforcement action on school property be supported by a judicial warrant issued by a judge. Requiring a judicial warrant ensures due process, clarity of authority, and consistency across school districts.

I strongly believe that schools must remain spaces of safety, not fear. Children cannot learn when they are worried about themselves, or their peers and classmates being taken from their classrooms or separated from their families. Protecting students emotional and physical well-being is not a political issue; it is a moral and developmental imperative.

LD 2106 upholds constitutional values, supports healthy child development and education, and ensures that Maine schools remain environments where all children—regardless of immigration status—can access education safely.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting Maine's students. I respectfully urge the committee to vote ought to pass on LD 2106.