



Testimony to the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on:
**LD2106, An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic
Records Without Proper Judicial Review**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committee:

My name is the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings, a resident of Winthrop and Pastor at the Falmouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ (UCC). On behalf of the Maine Conference of the UCC as the Chair of its Social Action Committee, I submit testimony *in support of LD2106*. In addition, we would like LD2106 amended to include “houses of worship” to the places where LD2106 would place limitations on immigration enforcement.

I write representing Christians and people of faith from the New England congregational tradition who follow one identified in sacred scripture as the “Prince of Peace” and who follow prophets calling us to be “the restorer of streets to live in.” Numerous churches and church members have taken this to heart by supporting the immigrant community, in many cases working closely and personally with those openly and with good reason seeking better lives for themselves and their families. We have literally seen some of these people, whom we know and support, taken down and taken into federal custody using tactics that simply do not look anything like the civilized and pro-human ways of our State and nation. There’s been a lot of talk about “sanctuary” in the context of immigration, particularly in denigrating the concept as it pertains to offering safe space to immigrants. This is regrettable. “Houses of worship” – our sanctuaries – are there and have always been there to offer “sanctuary” to people praying and seeking a word from their God. While “houses of worship” acknowledge that certain kinds of legal reporting are required, a person’s presence and participation in the life of a “house of worship” along with whatever records that entails is not one of them. Therefore, on behalf of the Social Action Committee of the Maine Conference, UCC, I testify in support of LD2106, with the added request of extending its limitations on immigration enforcement to include “houses of worship.”

Submitted by,
The Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings
Maine Conference United Church of Christ
Social Action Committee, Chair
Falmouth Congregational Church, UCC
Winthrop Resident