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LD 2106

I am writing to hopefully address one of the Trump administration's first actions in office: eliminating a federal policy that prohibited ICE enforcement actions at places like schools and hospitals. This historically non-partisan policy had ensured that all people could access crucial public services and meet basic human needs without fear. It was also clear that such policies did not pose any significant impediment to law enforcement, and the important public health reasons of ensuring all people could access these places far outweighed immigration enforcement needs. Under the current administration, and especially here in the Portland area, immigration enforcement is broad and indiscriminate, targeting immigrant communities in general and creating a public health crisis that includes extreme fear and trauma, as well as family separation, detention in inhumane conditions, and deportation to life-threatening circumstances.

As a teacher and a parent, I have seen the effects of these indiscriminate and unlawful abductions. One of my students has been prevented from coming to school due to his family's fears of deportation despite having legal status as asylum seekers. One of my children's teachers, also an asylum seeker, has to weigh the enormous risk of coming to work each day against being able to put food on the table as a single parent. This is unconscionable. Aside from the trauma and fear ICE is enacting upon Maine's immigrant population, ICE's actions impact all of us: this bill is also about protecting Maine's overall workforce and economy - when parents don't feel safe sending their kids to school or leaving them at daycare, they can't go to work. When my children's teachers can't go to work, then I can't go to work either.

While Maine does not have the authority to prohibit all immigration enforcement at places like schools, hospitals, and daycares – which is governed by federal law – the state can put in place measures to ensure we are not actively permitting enforcement at these places. Under the Constitution, to enter non-public areas, law enforcement officers must either present a valid judicial warrant OR receive voluntary consent to enter. Accordingly, LD 2106 protects the rights and safety of vulnerable Maine residents, including children, workers at public schools, healthcare facilities, daycares, and libraries, and serves key public policy interests, including making sure all Maine children receive an education and public health information is freely shared.