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January 29th, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 2106 – An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review

Chair Anne Carney, Chair Amy Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing on behalf of the Maine Community Action Partnership, the statewide network representing Maine's nine Community Action Agencies and the thousands of low-income individuals and families we serve each year. Our agencies operate Head Start and Early Head Start programs, fuel assistance (HEAP), housing stabilization programs, workforce development, food security programs, and a wide array of other services that keep Maine's most vulnerable residents safe, supported, and stabilized.

Over the past few weeks, our network has experienced increased staff absences, decreased attendance in our Head Start programs, and an overall reluctance to seek critical supports from certain clients. We have heard from parents who are keeping children home out of fear, seniors who have skipped critical appointments, and families who are forgoing assistance rather than risking an encounter with federal officials. The ripple effects are immediate: children miss early learning, working parents lose wages, and household budgets are further stretched to an unsustainable degree.

LD 2106 clarifies that immigration enforcement should not occur in or around sensitive locations without proper judicial documentation, such as early childcare centers, schools, health care facilities, and other essential public spaces. This approach is pragmatic and narrow in scope by preserving public trust and ensuring uninterrupted access to services that prevent family instability.

These negative impacts fall hardest on those who are already navigating poverty and experiencing compounded barriers. When fear pushes families to disengage from local community action programs, small problems can quickly escalate into crisis situations. LD 2106 meets the moment by creating a pathway that keeps lifeline services accessible to our most vulnerable neighbors. It accomplishes this by reducing fear and reinforcing trust so individuals and families can seek the support they need.

Thank you for your service and for your consideration.

Victoria D. Forkus

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