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LD 2106

Testimony of Hannah Pingree Supporting
LD 2106 - An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records
Without Proper Judicial Review
Thursday, January 29, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Hannah Pingree and I am from North Haven. Previously, I served as Director of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, a state legislator, and a chair of my local school board. I am also a parent of two teenage kids. It is with that experience that I provide this testimony supporting LD 2106, An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review.

I am grateful to Representative Sato and her co-sponsors for bringing this important legislation forward – especially at this urgent time for Maine.

Strong communities depend on strong institutions. In Maine, schools, health care facilities, child care providers, and libraries earn public trust by respecting personal privacy, following clear rules, and focusing on their core mission of service. LD 2106 is about preserving that trust.

This bill establishes clear boundaries around when and how nonpublic spaces and confidential records may be accessed for immigration enforcement purposes. It does not interfere with lawful enforcement activity. It does not prevent compliance with warrants or court orders. Instead, it ensures that voluntary cooperation does not occur without proper judicial review.

From my experience in state government and local leadership, I know how challenging it can be for frontline staff to respond to unexpected requests from law enforcement. Teachers, administrators, health care workers, librarians, and child care providers are not trained immigration officials. Without clear guidance, they may feel pressured to make quick decisions that carry serious legal and human consequences for kids, families, and the people they serve.

This is not a future concern. It is happening now. Families are making daily decisions based on fear and uncertainty about how public institutions may be used for immigration enforcement.

More than 1,100 students in Maine's largest district, Portland Public Schools, were absent on Friday, January 23rd. Absenteeism was even higher among certain racial groups and included nearly half of the multilingual student population. Other districts, including Westbrook, South Portland, and Biddeford, have also reported drops in attendance. Families are clearly questioning whether it is safe to attend school, seek medical care, or access public services.

At Maine Medical Center, the state's largest hospital, health care workers have reported feeling unsafe coming to work amid increased ICE activity, leading to unusually high call-outs. At a time when our health care system is already stretched thin, it is unacceptable for federal government actions to directly cause staffing shortages reminiscent of the worst days of the COVID pandemic. Scaring much-needed staff and caregivers away from their jobs does not make us safer. It compromises patient care for all Mainers and undermines the basic expectation that people should be able to go to work without fear.

LD 2106 addresses this problem in an immediate and practical way. By limiting voluntary assistance and requiring judicial oversight, it protects privacy rights while giving public institutions clear direction. Requiring the Attorney General to publish model policies and guidance ensures that staff at public institutions have the tools and clarity they need to comply with the law while protecting privacy. Uniform, statewide standards will help ensure that decisions are lawful, consistent, and not made under

pressure in the moment.

This legislation also reinforces a fundamental principle: public institutions exist to serve the public, not to act as extensions of federal enforcement agencies. Preserving that boundary protects public confidence and allows these institutions to function as intended.

At a time when many Maine communities are experiencing threats and harassment from federal immigration agents, as well as heightened anxiety and uncertainty, LD 2106 provides clarity, fairness, and stability. It strengthens due process, supports frontline workers, and helps ensure that essential public services remain accessible to everyone.

I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 2106.