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LD 2106

Unless you are Native to this land, you are here because of immigrants.

That sentence shouldn't be controversial. It is simply true. Every family story in Maine—whether it begins in Ireland, Somalia, Poland, Vietnam, Quebec, Puerto Rico, or somewhere we no longer remember—starts with someone who crossed a threshold in search of safety, work, or a future. Migration is not a modern inconvenience. It is the oldest human instinct there is. So when Immigration and Customs Enforcement appears at libraries, daycares, schools, and healthcare facilities, it feels like a fundamental misunderstanding of who we are—and how societies are meant to function.

For decades, both Republican and Democratic administrations recognized that immigration enforcement had limits. Policies were put in place to restrict ICE activity at so-called “sensitive locations” like public schools and hospitals. Not out of sentimentality, but out of common sense. The logic was simple: if people are afraid to send their kids to school or seek medical care, everyone pays the price. Disease spreads. Children fall behind. Communities fracture. Public trust erodes.

One of the first actions of the current federal administration was to dismantle those protections.

Since then, broad and indiscriminate enforcement has ramped up in Maine and across the country. The result has not been increased safety. It has been terror. Noncitizen residents—many here legally, many seeking asylum, which is not a loophole but a right under U.S. and international law—are sheltering in place. Families are skipping doctor’s appointments. Parents are afraid to walk their children into school. People are avoiding libraries, the last truly free civic spaces we have, because they are afraid that knowledge might come with handcuffs.

This is not what justice looks like.

Despite the rhetoric, ICE is not primarily arresting violent criminals. They are arresting people who are working, studying, parenting, caregiving—people doing exactly what we tell newcomers they must do to “earn” belonging. The cruelty lies not only in the arrests themselves, but in where they happen.

A daycare is not a crime scene.

A library is not a checkpoint.

A hospital is not a hunting ground.

LD 2106 offers Maine a chance to say this clearly and without apology. The bill would require ICE to present a valid judicial warrant—signed by a judge—to conduct enforcement at schools, hospitals and healthcare facilities, daycares, and libraries. It would also protect the sensitive personal information held at these places. Just as importantly, it provides guidance and support to teachers, librarians, healthcare workers, and staff, so they are not forced into moral and legal crises they never signed up for.

This matters. When we leave these decisions to exhausted educators, nurses, and librarians, we are not enforcing the law—we are outsourcing cruelty.

Protecting sensitive locations does not mean protecting criminal behavior. It means protecting children from trauma, patients from delayed care, and communities from unraveling. It means understanding that the right to migrate—to seek safety, stability, and dignity—is older than borders, older than nations, older than paperwork.

Maine has always known how to take care of its own. We shovel each other out. We show up with soup. We understand that survival here depends on cooperation, not fear. Allowing immigration enforcement to infiltrate our most human spaces violates that ethic.

Unless you are Native, you are here because someone before you crossed a line and

hoped they would be allowed to stay. LD 2106 is Maine's opportunity to honor that truth and to say, plainly and collectively: not here.