

Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Good morning, very early morning. It is 3 am as I am writing this letter. The thought of ICE officers entering Maine's schools, daycares, healthcare facilities or libraries prevents me from sleeping!

My name is Régine Whittlesey and I live in Brunswick, Maine.

I support strongly and with all my heart LD 2106. I don't understand why we must even think of defending this project. Please, please protect our most vulnerable population, our children, our ailing neighbors, our general population from having to face a distressing and possibly traumatizing encounter with the ICE police.

I am a 72-year-old grandmother and have three US citizen grandchildren ages 5, 10 and 16 in local schools. While their blond hair and pale complexion probably does not put them in danger if ever confronted with immigration and custom agents, it will not protect them from being distressed and disturbed , for the rest of their lives, at the view of any police officer, if ICE agents enter their schools. They are already anxious about the state of the world and of this country as they are starting to realize that life is not a fairy tale for everyone. The 10- and 16-year-old do not enjoy playing soccer anymore since many of their soccer friends do not dare come to school or to the soccer practice anymore, for fear of being confronted with ICE agents. Their childhood cocoon has been shattered. And this secondhand trauma is nothing compared to the families affected directly.

And ICE entering a daycare searching for hardened criminals? This makes me cry.

I am a US citizen but am originally from France. My mother who was born in 1912, was a long time Teacher. She told me that as a young primary school Teacher in northern France, she once had to face the Gestapo in her 3rd grade classroom. They took away a 9-year-old child in the middle of her class. My mother lived to be 94. She never forgot that child or pardoned herself for failing to save the child from the Gestapo.

Yes, ICE entering a school, a daycare, a healthcare facility or a library does not affect only the immigrant victim, it affects and traumatizes everyone around them. The impact of that visit, even if nobody is detained, will last for years to come. The lack of trust towards authority, the fear of the uniform will linger in their psyche forever.

Our state must align with our values and respect for human rights.

Please support LD 2106, which shows you care about our humanity.

Thank you.

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