

Mary Dunn
Whitefield

Dear Committee Members,
Please oppose:

LD 1340 (HP 991), An Act To Ensure Municipal Compliance with Federal Immigration Laws. When I read that this bill effectively punishes municipalities who will not cooperate with immigration officials by withholding state aid for general assistance and local schools I was shocked. This bill is not only morally wrong, it is a damaging policy that will erode the public trust in our law enforcement and tear our communities apart.

As someone who works with members of Maine's migrant and immigrant communities, it becomes more and more clear the dedication to family, community, and work I witness from those this bill would target in such a negative and destructive manner. I can't imagine anything more harmful than this. This is not how Maine should welcome the stranger, those who seek reunification with family and safety from harm.

I grew up believing that the police are there to keep us safe. And that is what I have always experienced. But this - this doesn't provide safety to anyone. On the contrary, it erodes the trust of our communities. It makes our communities feel more vulnerable and less safe. By cooperating with federal immigration authorities we erode the core of what we should stand for, and that is putting the safety and well being of all our community members front and center. This policy is incredibly harmful and will target vulnerable people who work hard. It will systematize racism, erode community trust, separate families, and cause great harm to our communities. All across the state local governments along with us the citizens are working hard to build positive police relationships and in some towns we are succeeding. Yet this type of cooperation with federal immigration officials would undermine those efforts.

This policy comes from a place of believing the incorrect myth that migrants are harmful to our society. That couldn't be further from the truth. After fleeing incredible violence they seek safety here in our communities. They are happy to call Maine home. They work at jobs that many others won't take. They grow and harvest our food. They take care of our elderly. They pay taxes yet get little of the economic benefits you and I get. They are our essential workers. They deserve our respect and whatever support we can give them to help them fulfill their request for citizenship. Yet this does the direct opposite. It causes them to live in fear that they or a loved one will be taken away. Losing a parent or child or friend and a much needed source of income. Sent back to the very places they fled.

Please again, I ask you to oppose the bill, LD 1340 (HP 991), An Act To Ensure Municipal Compliance with Federal Immigration Laws. Please, instead of this harmful bill,, consider policies that will build our communities up rather than tear them down.

Mary Dunn, Whitefield