

**Written Testimony for the Public Hearing for LD 1383 H.P. 0905 An Act to Require State  
Divestment from Perpetrators of International Human Rights Violations**

**Madison Taylor**

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I am writing in support of this bill as a concerned citizen because I feel the federal government's actions related to United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement are cruel, and their only purpose is to provoke outrage as they are obviously not concerned with protecting or caring for communities. I hope that this bill will further protect Maine from the atrocities we have seen happening in other states.

American immigration history can be characterized by persistent efforts to assert national sovereignty against "undesirable" foreigners. Governmental policy for regulating membership in American society on an economic basis evolved from the local, to the state, and eventually to national levels under the influence of anti-Irish nativism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nativism led to harassment and sometimes mob-led violence which escalated to concrete, state-backed action that had consequences on the lives of immigrants from many parts of the world in the United States. We should learn from these lessons of the past, we know now how cruel it was to deport Irish immigrants in the 1880s and 1890s, forcing Irish immigrants back onto cross-ocean voyages, and deserting deportees in new cities without any basic means of supporting themselves and separated from their families and loved ones. Often volume or increase in deportations was correlated with bolstering of political groups to gain support in elections.<sup>1</sup> The history of these cruelties should inform our feelings towards ICE, and the terrible conditions undocumented people are finding themselves in at this moment, and the harassment faced by anyone suspected of being undocumented.

Since January 2025 there have been 17 shootings by ICE officers, 4 of them deadly.<sup>2</sup> We've all watched as ICE terrifies communities across the country, most recently in Minnesota, leaving a mother of three dead. Since the shooting of Renee Good, administration officials have defended the use of deadly force, which agency guidelines say should be a last resort. These federal agents have not been properly prepared for the duties they are tasked with, and the federal response to the unnecessary violence perpetrated by ICE agents is to embrace and bolster the use of lethal force as self-defense. Last week, the Homeland Security Department posted a clip on social media of Stephen Miller, White House deputy chief of staff, in a message directed to ICE agents: "You have immunity to perform your duties, and no one; no city official, no state official, no illegal alien, no leftist agitator or domestic insurrectionist, can prevent you from

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<sup>1</sup> Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the 19th century Origins of American Immigration Policy* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Francis Flisiuk, "'Confusion and Tension'; Maine Law Enforcement Groups Decry Discourse on ICE," *WMTW Channel 8 ABC*, January 18, 2026, <https://www.wmtw.com/article/maine-ice-rumors-law-enforcement-calls-for-calm/70033134>.

fulfilling your legal obligations and duties.”<sup>3</sup> What prevents a recently recruited agent sucked into this whirlpool of hate and paranoia from using this unchecked force against you or me or one of our community members?

The threat that this division and violence will come to Maine looms over us. Although the increased deportations have already begun. Since mid-October 2025, ICE had arrested 230 people in Maine, according to figures from the Deportation Data Project, a research group that aggregates and publishes federal immigration data. 230 arrests in 2025 January through October, is a 73% increase in average monthly arrests from 2024. In my opinion a criminal conviction does not necessitate arrest by ICE, but even so, only 20% of those arrested have criminal convictions, most of those arrested have no criminal charges.<sup>4</sup> What is the purpose of this increase if not to sow division and terrorize immigrant communities?

Congresswoman Chellie Pingree’s office has reached out to the Department of Homeland Security multiple times to ask about the likelihood of a federal ICE deployment in Maine and has not received a clear answer. Pingree’s office expressed concern that if the Trump administration is planning action, they won’t publicly acknowledge it until enforcement begins.<sup>5</sup> Federal deployment of ICE is not about collaboration with state officials to make life better for people that live here. Their goal is to perpetuate division while harassing the immigrant communities of our state.

There are so many amazing nonprofits and advocacy organizations that support immigrants in moments of crisis including Maine Immigrant & Refugee Services, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, and Catholic Charities of Maine. Additionally, every town, township, or neighborhood in Maine has networks of care in which neighbors help their neighbors get by. ICE will not stop immigration, and it won’t fix any of the challenges immigrants face. ICE deployment in Maine will only bring division, violence, stress, and heartbreak to our wonderful state. I hope this bill can protect our communities in the case of a federal deployment of ICE.

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<sup>3</sup> Hamed Aleaziz and Nicholas Nehamas, “Under Trump, a Shift toward ‘Absolute Immunity’ for ICE,” *The New York Times*, January 15, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/15/us/politics/trump-ice-immunity.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Ari Snider, “ICE Arrests Jump Nearly 75% in Maine this year, as Detention Picked Up Over the Summer,” *Maine Public*, December 9, 2025, <https://www.mainepublic.org/immigration/2025-12-08/ice-arrests-jump-nearly-75-in-maine-this-year-as-detentions-picked-up-over-the-summer>

<sup>5</sup> Pearl Small, “Rumors of Increased ICE Activity in Maine Circulate without Official Confirmation,” *News Center Maine*, January 19, 2026, <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/local/rumors-increased-ice-activity-maine-circulate-without-official-confirmation/97-50331f1c-6577-451b-a73b-1046efcf198f>