Thursday, January 29, 2026

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

As immediate past president of the National Association of Social Workers, Maine Chapter (NASW, Maine), I am speaking on behalf of the organization in support of LD 2106: An Act to Protest Maine's Public Schools, Hospitals, Daycares, and Libraries from Immigration Control Enforcement (ICE). Social workers are on the front lines every day, supporting and helping keep our communities safe. Over 7,000 Maine social workers are in the hospitals, the schools, on the streets, and the hotlines providing care and collaborating with others to keep our streets and communities safe. As you know, Maine is under siege by ICE with their Operation Catch of the Day.

As a volunteer phone operator for the Maine Immigrant Hotline and Resource Hub, I am witnessing our streets and our immigrant communities not being safe. ICE is detaining immigrant neighbors and coworkers who have no criminal record, who have their green cards, who are seeking asylum from war torn countries where their lives are threatened. During detentions ICE officers are breaking car windows with infants and children strapped into their seats…. terrified. Once they depart, ICE is leaving cars running on the side of the road, leaving others to clean up the mess and trauma they leave behind. They are detaining anyone who they perceive to be an immigrant because they are not white or have an accent. They are sending them out of state as quickly as possible, away from their natural in-state support, tearing families apart, and making it more difficult for them to communicate with their families and to get legal advice.

LD 2106 is a policy that allows our immigrant communities to safely continue to work and get the support and care they need without fear. Yet the bill doesn't go far enough. Despite my support of this bill, I would like a buffer zone defined around these buildings where ICE officers will not be permitted. By doing so, it would allow immigrants to have less fear about going to work, not have to quit or lose their jobs, and allow them to be financially self-sufficient and stable contributors to our communities. Given country-based quotas, Maine's immigrants have been here for years, some for decades waiting to complete the asylum process. They have been the backbone of our communities while they acclimate to our culture, doing the hard labor that allows our hospitals, educational institutions, courts, restaurants, hotels, farms, and fishing industries to function.

We currently have children missing school, adults quitting their jobs or not showing up for work for fear of being detained. They are our family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. Similar to the COVID pandemic, our community members are "sheltering in place", which is not good for them, not good for the functioning of these essential services, and not good for our economy.

NASW Maine urges you to pass LD 2106 and consider defining "No ICE boundaries" to keep ICE agents away from these essential services and to have all our communities be safe. We urge you to expedite your decision about this and do everything possible to dampen the potential powder keg of energy on our streets that is blowing up on the streets of Minneapolis to not happen in Maine.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Schirmer, ACSW
Immediate Past President
NASW Maine Chapter

Dawn Brown, MSW
Executive Director, NASW Maine Chapter
Executive Director, NASW Connecticut Chapter