



## Maine LD 2106: An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records without Proper Judicial Review

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Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am grateful for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 2106 and wish I could be with you at the hearing for a discussion.

I am one of the two co-leaders of the **Maine chapter** of the Scholars Strategy Network and a longtime resident of Bangor. The **Scholars Strategy Network** is a state-wide volunteer network of researchers and educators who work hard to support lawmakers like you and our communities by sharing clear evidence from effective research that is relevant to the critical decisions you make daily.

I offer this testimony based on my own professional expertise and experience as a Mainer; I do not speak on behalf of the University of Maine or the University of Maine System.

I have had the joy of teaching and working with student researchers at the University of Maine for 15 years. In that time, I have seen both the incredible benefits of a diverse community of learners and the critical importance of safety in public service spaces.

Recently, I had the joy of serving on an undergraduate Honors thesis committee for a student who came to the US from Kazakhstan. She is one of many remarkable students I have met who originally came from beyond the US, and whose experiences have elevated our classrooms and expanded the applications of our learning, teaching us about her family's experiences back home. In one of her final reflections, she wrote about the consequences of immigration actions on her as an immigrant student. She said that although she felt support from her peers, "that support couldn't overshadow the fear. Fear for my friends who are affected, and fear for what would come next."

The evidence is clear that public services like education and healthcare are both critical to the functioning of our communities and that they are only effective when everyone can feel safe using them. Decades of research in psychology and education show that learning depends upon a basic sense of security. Students who are anxious or fearful show worse attention, memory, and academic performance. And chronic stress impairs cognitive development and emotional regulation. The fear of immigration action at schools doesn't only impact immigrant students - all learners are affected by the worry that enforcement action could happen at their school at any moment, potentially targeting them or their friends or families. That stress and ambiguity has significant negative educational and health outcomes for all learners.

The same principle applies to adults navigating healthcare or social services. When families fear that entering a school, hospital, or library could expose them to enforcement action, they will avoid those spaces. Disengagement from those services that are designed to reduce long-term social costs and promote self-sufficiency is detrimental to all of us. When people avoid routine or preventative care, they are more likely to need to rely on emergency services later, driving up costs for hospitals and communities. Further, untreated infectious disease, chronic illness, limited prenatal care, etc., all have spillover effects that affect entire communities, not just the individuals involved.

It is critical that we protect safe access to public spaces for education, health and childcare, libraries, and other public goods. LD2106 provides that safety, while still ensuring that immigration laws can be effectively enforced. It simply requires the same judicial oversight in sensitive public spaces that is already expected in many other contexts. Requiring a judicial warrant respects due process and helps ensure that our schools, daycares, hospitals, and libraries are not perceived as defacto immigration enforcement centers. When they are, it undermines their missions, erodes public confidence, and makes those institutions less effective at the very tasks taxpayers fund them to perform.

LD2106 is a necessary step to ensure that our public systems remain places for learning, healing, and community. The present immigration actions in our communities are threatening these pillars of Maine's community, and risking the quality of education and healthcare for all Mainers. This bill will help reduce these consequences that we are already facing. It is a practical investment in Maine's social, economic, and civic well-being. For these reasons, I ask you and the members of the Judiciary Committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2106. Thank you.