



Eye on Augusta: Roll Calls; SNAP for Seniors, Immigration, Food Sovereignty, Etc.

House Kills Immigration Enforcement Bill

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The Maine House voted 77-59 to defeat a bill that would have compelled towns and cities to require their local police to enforce immigration laws. LD 366, sponsored by Rep. Larry Lockman (R-Amherst), came in the wake of President Donald Trump's executive order that allows the federal Department of Homeland Security to deputize local law enforcement officials as immigration enforcement agents. In a lengthy floor speech, Lockman cited crimes committed by a handful of African immigrants in Maine as justification for the bill.

"Make no mistake, enactment will save lives," said Lockman. "Too many Maine people have already lost their lives because of local policies that handcuff and muzzle Maine police officers."

Numerous studies, done by groups ranging from the National Bureau of Economic Research to the conservative Cato Institute, have concluded that immigrants actually commit fewer crimes than native-born Americans. Opponents of the bill feared that it would lead to racial profiling of people perceived to be "foreign" by police and would break the trust between the immigrant community and police, making non-citizens less likely to report crimes or provide evidence. Rep. Lance Harvell (R-Farmington), one of four House Republicans who opposed the bill, said the bill would also have a "chilling effect" on attracting younger workers to the state.

"We should be facilitating the citizenship of those who are productive in our country," he said. "But the federal government has created this mess and it's going to require the federal government to clean it up. This bill will help keep us the oldest and the whitest state in the United States."

Of the midcoast delegation in attendance Monday, all of the Republicans supported the bill and all of the Democrats along with independent Rep. Owen Casas opposed it.

- See more at: <http://www.freepressonline.com/Content/Home/Homepage-Rotator/Article/Eye-on-Augusta-Roll-Calls-SNAP-for-Seniors-Immigration-Food-Sovereignty-Etc/78/720/52713#sthash.Y5zKOet5.dpuf>