



Statement of Presente! Maine

Submitted for the Congressional Field Hearing: *"Seeking Justice in Biddeford: Oversight of ICE's Use of Force in the Death of Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero"*

August 17, 2026, in Biddeford, Maine

Good morning, Ranking Member Thompson, Representative Pingree, Representative Clark, Representative Carter, and other Honorable Members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

My name is Crystal Cron. I am a mother, daughter, sister, and lifelong resident of southern Maine. I am the founding director of Presente! Maine, a grassroots organization by and for Latine peoples of Maine. Presente works to bridge gaps in healthcare, nutrition, housing, safety, and other basic needs, while also advocating for safer, more equitable policies and practices to meet the needs of all Maine people.

I want to begin today by reminding us that Johan Sebastián's death was preventable. Every death in the hands of ICE is preventable. The question before us is: do we have the courage and political will to protect and defend the lives of everyone in our communities?

To say we are heartbroken does not convey the depth of the exhaustion, terror, or grief we have felt since July 13. Over the last month, our team has had the privilege of mourning and learning alongside Johan's family. I learned that Johan was loving and hardworking. He often worked six or seven days a week, from sunrise to when his child was in bed. He came to this country with a dream to live a dignified life with his family. His murder was a final act of violence in a life lived under oppressive conditions designed to strip him of his dignity and steal his humanity.

Workers across Maine see themselves in Johan. For years, Presente! has worked alongside seafood, agricultural, hospitality, and construction workers who are central to Maine's economy. These industries flourish because of migrant labor, while migrant workers are too often underpaid, exploited, and forced to work extraordinary hours. Thousands of people labor to sustain the economy we celebrate as the pride and joy of Maine while living under the constant threat of detention, deportation, and death.

In processing plants just one town over from where we sit today, migrants shuck and pack lobster meat piece-meal at 40 cents a pound, while that same lobster goes to market for \$60 a pound. While beautiful beaches and parks surround us, immigrant families have limited time for rest and recreation. We live under an economic and carceral system that deems some lives more valuable than others.

This violence did not emerge overnight. It has been built over decades through policing, detention, and deportation systems that deprive people of their freedom, isolate them from their communities, and hold them in subhuman conditions. Over the last year, families have feared going to the grocery store, dropping kids off at school, and seeking medical care because immigration enforcement has made ordinary life dangerous.

In early January, we received a tip that ICE was coming to Maine in unprecedented numbers. We watched what was happening in Chicago and Minneapolis; we knew horror was coming. So we did what we were practiced in: we told our community to shelter in place. Since 2020, we have built systems to help our neighbors survive crises. We grow and deliver culturally appropriate food. We support people with rent. We provide accompaniment and transportation to critical medical appointments. We do the work of keeping one another alive.

On January 21, we received the first report that multiple agents were circling a family home in a residential neighborhood in Portland. Over the next several days, hundreds of immigration police tore through our neighborhoods, abducting parents like Johan. Agents claimed they were targeting “criminals.” Instead, they indiscriminately snatched people off the streets, profiling them based on appearance alone. Many who were abducted, like Johan, were not immigration targets. Agents pulled guns on nonviolent observers practicing their First Amendment rights, followed people home who documented ICE activity, and intimidated our neighbors.

Advocates warned that it was a matter of time before ICE murdered someone in our streets. David Brouillette’s murder of Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero could and should have been prevented. Brouillette must be held accountable, but accountability for one person cannot allow us to ignore the violence and dehumanization inherent to ICE’s policing and detention system.

Johan’s death is not an isolated tragedy. It is part of a system that has inflicted fear, separation, detention, and death on immigrant communities. The responsibility for his death, and the many deaths by immigration police and in ICE detention this year, is a collective one.

Maine people have been clear about what is needed. ICE out of Maine, ICE out from everywhere. The abolishment of ICE and all immigration policing is one of many steps toward repair. It is not the last.

Today, Presente! Maine is calling on Congress to pass Congresswoman Ramirez and Congresswoman Clarke’s Melt ICE Act to end DHS’s funding to detain and monitor immigrants and reinvest those funds into services that support life. We ask you to mourn and grieve Johan Sebastián’s life by abolishing ICE and ending all funding for immigration policing. Our healing and future depend on it.

We will not let this death be reduced to a footnote in this administration’s enforcement statistics. There is no freedom until everyone is free. Thank you.