



January 27, 2026

NH House Housing Committee, Chairman Joe Alexander  
Re: oppose HB1709

Dear Chairman Alexander and members of the Housing Committee,

The New Hampshire Council of Churches is the umbrella organization for seven denominations and more than 300 churches across our beautiful Granite State. Our member congregations are guided by a faith tradition that calls us to protect human dignity, resist injustice, and build communities rooted in hospitality rather than fear.

HB 1709 violates these core commitments. As the Immigrant Solidarity Network has made clear, this bill would place housing providers in an impossible and unlawful position by effectively requiring them to screen tenants based on citizenship, nationality, or perceived immigration status. These practices are explicitly prohibited under federal and state housing discrimination laws. Landlords are neither qualified nor permitted to determine a person's immigration status, whether that status was properly reported, or whether it meets federal requirements. This bill invites discrimination, legal exposure, and unequal treatment while undermining the stability of housing markets and neighborhoods across New Hampshire.

From a faith perspective, this bill stands in direct opposition to the teachings of Jesus, who tells us plainly, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" in Matthew 25:35. The command to welcome and protect the stranger is not a minor or isolated theme. In the Hebrew scriptures alone, God instructs the people to love and care for the stranger thirty-six times, more than almost any other moral command. This repeated call reflects a deep moral truth: a just society is measured by how it treats those with the least power and the greatest vulnerability.

As people of faith, the NH Council of Churches cannot abide overt, anti-immigrant bills. NH is better than importing legislation drafted by national entities seeking to spread division amongst neighbors.

HB 1709 would fracture communities, encourage discrimination, and erode the moral fabric that binds us together. From indigenous trade routes, to colonists, to mill workers recruited from Quebec and Europe, to refugee and immigrant families who continue to build our workforce, churches, and towns today, NH has been shaped by immigrants. HB 1709 departs from that history and seeks to undermine the social cohesion and economic contributions that have long strengthened our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa D Beaudoin", written over a light gray horizontal line.

Lisa D Beaudoin, Executive Director  
New Hampshire Council of Churches