



# Maine Sheriffs' Association

*"One Team, One Mission"*

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Sheriff Troy Morton, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Sheriff Scott Kane, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – Sheriff Barry Curtis, Secretary – Sheriff Todd Brackett, Treasurer – Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, Immediate Past President – Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

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January 29, 2024

## **LD 2130 - An Act to Prohibit Unauthorized Paramilitary Training**

Good afternoon Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee. My name is Ken Mason. I am the Sheriff of Kennebec County and Chair of the Maine Sheriffs' Association's Legislative Policy Committee. Maine's Sheriffs are neither for, nor against LD 2130, An Act to Prohibit Unauthorized Paramilitary Training. We completely understand and agree with the intent of this bill, but it is too broad as currently written.

Maine citizens from various African American and Semitic communities throughout Maine have been frequently terrorized by those who intend to intimidate and bully members of the communities. Individuals who continually exercise their 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right of Free Speech often spread fear to those in our communities that are individuals of color, or those who practice religions that are perceived to be different than their own. These actions are irrefutably unacceptable.

Maine's sheriffs, by virtue of our oath, have sworn to uphold everyone's Constitutional rights. This bill could unintentionally impede well intentioned groups from training. Groups who have no illegal intent or desire to intimidate. Groups like, private security firms, or American Legions who might want to train as a hobby could be affected by the broad nature of this bill.

Maine's Sheriffs believe we need to eradicate anti-Semitic and racist activities, but we need to do so with other tools provided by State statute or Federal statute, without limiting those groups that have no intention of threatening or intimidating any of our neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Ken Mason, Chair  
MSA Legislative Policy Committee