

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Prevent High-speed Chases

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRS §2117 is enacted to read:

§ 2117. Unlawful use

It is an offense under this section to allow unlawful use of a motor vehicle. A law enforcement officer who observes a violation may determine it unsafe to engage in a chase of the offending vehicle and alternatively may record the time and the location of the violation, the registration plate number and a description of the vehicle involved. The officer shall initiate an investigation of the reported violation and, if possible, contact the registered owner of the motor vehicle involved and request that the registered owner supply information identifying the operator. If the operator of the vehicle is determined by the investigation, the officer shall summons the operator for the observed violation; otherwise the officer may summons the registered owner for the observed violation. In addition, the investigating officer may summons the registered owner for allowing the unlawful use of the vehicle under this section. It is not a defense to the offense of allowing unlawful use that the registered owner was not operating the vehicle at the time of the violation. The penalty for the violation of allowing unlawful use under this section is \$500.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a law enforcement officer, rather than engaging in a high-speed chase, to issue a summons to an offender for an observed violation. If the operator is not determined, the owner of the registered vehicle may be summonsed for the observed violation. The registered owner of the vehicle may also be charged with the offense of allowing unlawful use, whether the owner was in the vehicle or not, for a fine of \$500.