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**NEITHER FOR – NOR AGAINST LD 405 AN ACT TO PREVENT FALSE REPORTING LEADING TO EVACUATION,
SHUTDOWN OR LOCKDOWN**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Major Scott Gosselin and I am submitting this letter on behalf of the Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety as Neither For – Nor Against LD 405 AN ACT TO PREVENT FALSE REPORTING LEADING TO EVACUATION, SHUTDOWN OR LOCKDOWN.

As currently written, this bill would add the 911 system to the list of those persons or places where, if made, false reports or false public alarms could result in a charge of either a Class D crime or a Class C crime if it causes the evacuation, shutdown or lockdown of specific buildings or locations. Our experience with these kinds of calls leads us to believe that a false report or false public alarm is just as likely to come through our business communication lines as through the 911 system. I have been working with Brodie Hinckley, the Public Safety Bureau Director of Consolidated Emergency Communications in review of the language for this bill. Our only suggestion for this bill as originally written was to include the business lines of any Emergency Communication Center as a means through which application of this statute would apply. We have been working with the bill sponsor, Senator Anne Carney on a definition for Emergency Communications Centers and language which would include business lines at those centers. Senator Carney has been very receptive and supportive of these changes and we hope they will appear in a coming amendment to this original language.

This past fall as students returned to school here in Maine, you might remember the false report or false alarms that were received by the Emergency Communications Centers as related to school shootings that were actively occurring at several high schools across the state. Business communications lines were used for those hoax reports which caused a great deal of alarm, consternation, and evacuation of schools across the State of Maine. The current wording for this bill does not include business lines. If the false public report or alarm resulted in evacuation of certain places, such as schools in this case, this bill also creates the crime of Aggravated False Public Alarm or Report which will allow officers the ability to charge a Class C felony crime in those instances as we saw this fall.

If an amendment is added to this bill which would include the business communication lines for those Emergency Communications Centers as a means through which this statute would apply, we would support this bill. For this reason, I urge you to consider an amendment to LD 405 which would add the necessary language to include those false reports and false public alarms made through the business communications lines at any Maine Emergency Communications Center statewide.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time.