



# MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

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## **Statement in Support to L.D. 405, An Act To Prevent False Reporting Leading To Evacuation, Shutdown Or Lockdown Submitted by Chief Charles Rumsey March 6, 2023**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Charles Rumsey, and I am the Chief of the Cumberland Police Department. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in Support of LD 405.

The Mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

According to the bill summary,

This bill amends the crime of false public alarm or report by including making a false public alarm or report to the enhanced 9-1-1 services and by making the offense a Class C crime if the violation causes the evacuation, shutdown or lockdown of a building, school, public square or park, place of assembly or public transportation facility or generates an emergency response from a law enforcement officer or agency, a firefighter or firefighting agency or any other emergency services personnel.

We support LD 405 because we believe our country is on high alert. We hear from citizens every day that they are worried for their children in schools, their family in public spaces or friends at a concert. We respond to every call with urgency because we know that every minute counts. These calls can take a tremendous amount of resources and even more so when we have to evacuate, shutdown or lock down a space.

LD 405 is a necessary statutory change because people deserve peace of mind, and they are not getting that with the increasing number of calls that make false reports. For example, this year we had to evacuate multiple schools across the State

in one week. We had to treat each one like the potential catastrophe that it thankfully did not turn out to be. We responded to these calls as if it were going to be a catastrophe and we will continue to respond as if it is going to be a catastrophe. But we believe that a much stronger deterrent to making these false reports needs to be in place, because we need to make sure resources are available when there is an actual catastrophe. LD 405 is that deterrent.

We also support the amendment that Senator Carney proposed. We believe any amendment that broadens the scope of the false reports is better for public safety. For example, the majority of the false reports made about schools recently were made to business lines of the police departments and not through 911. We would support all amendments that further deter false reports to all emergency personnel.

For these reasons, we hope that you will vote in favor of LD 405. And, on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we want to thank you for your work on this Committee.