

Jack Clements
Saco Police
LD 673

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Jack Clements, Chief of Police for the City of Saco, and I am providing testimony regarding LD 673, An Act to Direct the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to Develop a Nonresidential Law Enforcement Program.

Currently, the state statute regarding the training of law enforcement officers in Maine states that new officers be trained within one year of hire and that the training be conducted in a residential academy. The state has, in the past, not followed the residential requirement. This occurred in the 1990's with nonresidential academies being conducted in South Portland and Portland. These academies were conducted so new officers could receive training within the one year requirement. If there is ever going to be a different model being looked at for police training in Maine, the residential piece should be removed so the state does not violate the statute again.

Additionally, for the state to provide exceptional training to its law enforcement officers, there needs to be a commitment to funding the Maine Criminal Justice Academy at an appropriate level with appropriate staffing. The current staffing is well below the level in the mid 1990's which results in police departments across the state supplementing the academy with police department trainers. When I commit Saco police officers to assist in training at the academy, I have to pay the trainer and pay overtime for an officer to fill the trainers shift. This is in addition to the amount I pay to send a new officer to the academy. Properly funding the academy and providing additional academy staff would ease the burden on my staff and save City of Saco taxpayers the additional overtime funding needed to support the academy.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Jack Clements
Chief of Police
City of Saco