



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Statement of Opposition to L.D. 1247, Resolve, to Study Training in Racial Issues, Racial Justice and Social Issues at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and Study Additional Requirements for Law Enforcement Officers and Candidates April 20, 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the distinguished Committee on Judiciary. My name is Charles Rumsey. I am the Chief of the Cumberland Police Department, and President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in opposition to LD 1247.

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 establishes the 17-member Law Enforcement Training and Qualifications Study Committee to review law enforcement officer training. The committee is authorized to meet 6 times and is required to report its recommendations for training for law enforcement officers in racial issues, racial justice and social issues and for additional requirements for law enforcement officers and candidates by January 3, 2024. The Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety is authorized to submit legislation relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.

The Maine Chiefs oppose LD 1247 because it is duplicative of the work that is already done by the Board of Trustees for the Academy. Title 25, section 2802 of the Maine Revised Statutes already establishes a Board of Trustees which is empowered to establish training and certification standards for law enforcement officers and corrections officers, among other duties and responsibilities. The make up of the Board is established by statute, and includes ex officio members as well as members appointed by the Governor, including a county sheriff, chief of a municipal department, 2 officers of municipal departments who are not chiefs, an

educator, a prosecutor, a federal law enforcement representative, 3 citizen representatives, a municipal official such as a town or city manager, and a member recommended to the Governor by the Wabanaki tribal governments. Gubernatorial appointments are for 3 years, ensuring fair and democratic representation.

The proposed legislation would effectively create a committee to do work that the Board of Trustees is already doing. The Board's meetings are public meetings, and any member of the public are able and welcome to approach the Board with ideas and concerns regarding training topics at any time.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the establishment of mandatory training topics for every law enforcement officer in the state, and in fact, in the past few years has required that officers receive training in the Law Enforcement Approach to Substance Abuse Disorders, Implicit Bias, De-escalation, and Response to Mental Health Calls. Curricula for these classes are developed with input from subject matter experts. The work which the bill seeks to ensure is already happening.

Additionally, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy is currently working with an outside vendor to complete a job and task analysis and to create a strategic plan for the Academy's future operation. This process should be able to be completed prior to any legislatively mandated review or study process.

The Maine Chiefs of Police Association works closely with the Department of Public Safety and specifically with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to ensure that training offered by the Academy is high-quality, topical and ensures that our officers are able to engage in best-practice policing. Another oversight organization is duplicative and unnecessary.

For these reasons, we would ask you to oppose LD 1247 and vote ought not to pass on this bill. On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we want to thank the committee members for your work on this Committee.