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April 26, 2023

Senator Anne Beebe-Center, Chair
Representative Suzanne Salisbury
Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety
100 State House Station Room 436
Augusta, ME 04330

RE: LD 1087 – An Act to Remove Restrictions in the Provisions of Law
Relating to No Knock Warrants

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and Members of the Criminal
Justice and Public Safety Committee:

MACDL opposes LD 1087.

Once again, the ink is barely dry on the law that correctly curtailed no knock warrants in the last Legislative session, and here we have a bill that without any reliable information about what has happened since that should change the law, seeks to repeal it.

Please do not pass this bill. MACDL testified at the last session when eliminating “no knock” warrants was proposed (and which was ultimately passed into law) and MACDL is here today to speak against this bill because unchecked proliferation of “no-knock” warrants has not made citizens any safer and has, in fact, made too many of our citizens decidedly less so.

Experts have termed the execution of no-knock warrants as “forced entry raids”—an apt descriptor. No-knock warrants, whether for searches or arrests, are often carried out in the middle of the night, intended to be used to disorient the people in that location, with screaming officers—guns drawn. The execution of such warrants is dangerous to both occupants of the residence and law enforcement—without knowing that it is law enforcement breaking down a door, many homeowners would believe it was their right to defend themselves and their families against such intruders—and use any means necessary to do so.

No-knock warrants have been a weapon in the War on Drugs—and their usefulness and effectiveness is disputed. When law enforcement gets it wrong—and when they are acting by authority vested in them by a judge—people can be injured and people can die.

The Legislature made the right decision in eliminating the use of no-knock warrant execution in this State. Nothing has changed since then other than the proponents of this bill did not want the restrictions passed the last time around.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to address this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter F. McKee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Walter" being more prominent than the last name "McKee".

Walter F. McKee
Chair, Legislative Committee