



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

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Statement in Opposition to L.D. 1903, Resolve, to Create an Advisory Council to Oversee the Review and Revision of the Maine Criminal Code and Other Statutes Establishing Criminal Offenses May 23, 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the distinguished Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Charles Rumsey. I am the Chief of the Cumberland Police Department, and the President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association against LD 1903.

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 resolve creates an advisory council to select an outside consultant to review the Maine Criminal Code and other statutes establishing Class A to Class E crimes in the Maine Revised Statutes for criminal offenses that have not been charged or have rarely been charged within the previous 10 years and other offenses not conducive to public safety in the State and the proper application of the Maine Criminal Code and of the laws regarding other offenses that are designated as Class A to Class E crimes in the Maine Revised Statutes and determine whether to eliminate those offenses from or retain those offenses in the Maine Criminal Code and in other laws. This resolve directs the advisory council to submit a report based upon the review and any recommended legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over criminal justice and public safety matters, which is authorized to report out legislation to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

The Maine Chiefs are opposed to LD 1903 for two main reasons.

First, this work is already being done. There are ongoing stakeholder groups that meet and work through the criminal statutes to ensure that there are proper

classifications. For example, this session we have supported three bills that have made changes to the criminal code in this committee, the Transportation Committee and in the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife committee. We supported those bills because we believe that need to constantly review our laws to ensure that people are appropriately held accountable and that victims are able to find peace so that the criminal justice system can operate smoothly. These groups will continue to meet to find common ground so that everyone feels like the changes are appropriate so that we can come to the legislature unified about the issues.

This brings us to our second point. We are concerned about the make up of the Advisory Council. We do not believe that the makeup is diverse enough to ensure that any possible solutions proposed by the Council are successful in upcoming legislative sessions. For example, there should be at least one member of law enforcement on this council because we are on the front lines and have firsthand knowledge of what laws are important and what can be removed or have a lower classification.

On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we want to thank the committee members for your work on this Committee. And we would ask that you oppose LD 1903.