



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2431 • South Portland, Maine 04116-2431

Chief Edward J. Tolan (ret.), Executive Director, Tel: (207) 838-6583
email: mcopa@maine.rr.com Web site: www.mainechiefs.com

Statement in support of

L.D. 2129, An Act to Establish a Statewide Sexual Assault Forensic Examination Kit Tracking System and Conduct an Inventory of Existing Forensic Examination Kits in the Possession of Law Enforcement

January 29, 2024

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the Acting President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in support of LD 2129.

The Mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association 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.

The genesis of this proposal stems from the important work started last year through LD 1484 that created a sexual assault kit tracking pilot program. As stated in the legislation, this proposal requires the establishment of a statewide sexual assault forensic examination kit tracking system and an inventory of all sexual assault forensic examination kits in the possession of law enforcement agencies. The system must provide relevant information for victims, regardless if they report the assault, and other approved users regarding the processing, custody, analysis and destruction of evidence. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) must report annually to this Committee and the Governor on the status of sexual assault forensic examination kits reported in the tracking system.

Additionally, law enforcement agencies that receive, maintain, store, or preserve sexual assault forensic examination kits must complete an inventory of all kits in its possession and report its findings to DPS by June of 2025, with the charge that DPS will publicly report its findings by September of the same year.

The importance of this tracking and inventory system can not be stressed enough. Victims of sexual assault have experienced unimaginable harm. We want to ensure that these survivors can easily access real-time data about the status of their own kits, while also getting valuable data statewide on the journey of these kits as they move from healthcare facilities to law enforcement agencies and eventually to the state crime lab. As an emergency measure, passage of this bill will accomplish

these goals and will help strengthen Maine's enforcement of sexual assault laws and our overall response to sexual assaults.

To that end, the Maine Crime Lab within the Department of Public Safety must be funded properly to conduct this critical work. The worst thing that could happen to sexual assault survivors is provide an unrealistic expectation that they will have reliable access to their kits, only to have processing stalled due to the lack of needed supports for the Crime Lab to carry out this mission.

On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we thank the Committee for its consideration of this proposal, and we respectfully ask members to support the passage of LD 2129.