



Maine County Commissioners Association

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LD 2094, Resolve, to Require the Establishment of a Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers

January 29, 2024

Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Salisbury, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as a member of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as chair of the legislative policy committee of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony ***neither for nor against*** LD 2094.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

What does LD 2094 do? LD 2094 requires the Department of Public Safety to convene a stakeholder group composed of individuals representing law enforcement officers, retired law enforcement officers, criminal justice educators and administrators, private security firms, and mental health professionals to examine and propose long-term solutions to improve the recruitment, retention, and wellness of law enforcement officers.

Discussion. Law enforcement officers bravely serve our communities and provide essential services to ensure the safety of all Maine people. Recruiting and retaining qualified law enforcement officers continues to be a challenge across the country, including here in Maine—particularly in rural counties and communities.

Our Association does not take a position on the creation of the stakeholder group proposed in this bill. However, should the Legislature decide to move forward with establishing such stakeholder group, we would request that it include a representative from our Association, as well as representatives from the Maine Municipal Association, Maine Sheriffs Association, and the Maine Chiefs of Police Association.

- **Proposed Amendment:** Add to the list of participants "a representative of a statewide association representing county commissioners."

Conclusion. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, and if you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Gorden
Chair, Legislative Policy Committee

cc: Commissioner Richard Dutremble, President, MCCA
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel