



Janet T. Mills
Governor

Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE STATE POLICE

45 Commerce Drive - Suite 1
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Testimony of Lieutenant Mathew Casavant
Maine State Police

Neither For Nor Against LD 2237

An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources

Sponsored by Speaker Talbot Ross
Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services: My name is Lieutenant Mathew Casavant, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police neither for nor against LD 2237, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources.

My testimony today will be specifically related to the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police's role in this bill outlined in Parts E and F. This bill would create a Gun Shop Project and an alert system to the public and licensed firearm dealers in the event of an active shooter situation.

The Gun Shop Project will require the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop educational materials related to suicide prevention to be distributed to gun shops and other organizations identified by the Department. These materials must be created as written materials, such as pamphlets, signs, posters, tip sheets, or other media in addition to an online training course. In the creation of these materials costs would be incurred with the creation, printing, and distribution of the printed materials and staff hours distributing these materials to the more than 850 federally licensed firearms dealers in Maine.

There would be costs in developing an online training portal including the development of a database to house the training video, costs to prepare and maintain the video, and technology fees



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to ensure compliance with State network requirements and cyber security. Contracting with a private vendor would require approvals through the State Office of Information Technology. If a private vendor was not utilized there would be programming costs and fees associated with the State Office of Information Technology and it is unknown if they have the capacity to take on this work.

In addition to the online training piece there is a separate training which would be made available to gun shops and other organizations that focus on methods to recognize signs, symptoms, and indicators of suicide risk and available suicide prevention resources.

Without an increase in headcount, the Department of Public Safety doesn't have the capacity to fulfill the additional responsibilities that would result from this bill. The tasks will fall to the Maine State Police Weapons and Licensing Unit, which consists of a State Police Sergeant, a Detective and two Management Analysts. The Weapons and Professional Licensing Unit is already responsible for processing thousands of concealed handgun permits from 360 Maine Towns and all nonresident applications. There are statutory requirements related to the timeline for processing these permits. Additionally, the Weapons and Licensing Unit is also responsible for processing licenses of all Private Investigators, Contract Security Companies and polygraphers in the State of Maine. Without additional headcount, shouldering the added responsibility this bill will require is unattainable.

Part F of this bill requires the Department of Public Safety to develop and implement procedures to notify the public of active shooter situations. Those procedures must include procedures for notifying the deaf and hard of hearing community. The Maine State Police would need to review and test a system developed by a private vendor or to develop their own system to comply with this requirement. The Maine State Police would also have to define what an active shooter situation is to trigger this alert. Do we include homicides or other shooting situations where the suspects are still at large?

The final piece of this bill would require the Maine State Police to study issues concerning the development and implementation of procedures to notify all holders of federal firearm license in the state regarding all statewide law enforcement alerts relating to persons determined to be dangerous or in mental health crisis. The Maine State Police does not have the capacity to conduct



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such a study without additional personnel. This study would need to be extensive including work with many stakeholders and partners within Maine as well as consulting with the Federal Bureau of Investigation related to the sharing of Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS).

On behalf of the State Police and the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your careful consideration of these issues. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Mathew Casavant