



# Maine Sheriffs' Association

*"One Team, One Mission"*

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February 29, 2024

## **L.D. 1771 – An Act Regarding Speedy Trials**

Senator Carney, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Dale Lancaster. I am the Sheriff of Somerset County and Immediate Past-President of the Maine Sheriffs Association. L.D. 1771 - An Act Regarding Speedy Trials has unanimous opposition of Maine Sheriffs Association's legislative policy committee.

Maine sheriffs deeply appreciate the attempt to reduce the number of inmates who are awaiting trial in Maine's county and regional jails. As you may know, our jail populations are averaging over 80% pre-trial inmates. Sadly, this bill will not lower those populations.

When discussing this bill, the opportunity to recommend a solution was brought forward and endorsed by the membership. We have seen other states successfully develop a state-wide Office of Public Defender. We believe if you work with Maine's Attorney General's office to implement, this could better address the problems we're facing with our pre-trial populations.

To summarize our position on LD 1771, please note the following:

- 👉 Passage of this bill will not lower our jail populations.
- 👉 Speedy trial is already a constitutional right.
- 👉 Not able to compare other state's speedy trial right statute with Maine as all of our resources and procedures are different, including the inability to currently find defense counsel.
- 👉 This may lead to mass dismissals affecting public safety.

Maine sheriffs urge you to vote to unanimously defeat LD 1771. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, Immediate Past-President  
Maine Sheriffs' Association

