

Colleen Brown
Whiting
LD 461

Written Testimony in Support of LD 461

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
February 24, 2025

Dear Senator Beebe Center, Representative Hasenfus, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Colleen Brown and I am a resident of Washington County. I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 461, a bill proposing the addition of four Maine State Police officers to the Washington County beat. This legislation is crucial for enhancing public safety in our community, which has been grappling with significant challenges related to violent crime and drug-related offenses.

Recent data underscores the severity of the situation in Washington County. In 2020, our county experienced the second-highest violent crime rate in Maine, with nearly 1.5 violent offenses per 1,000 residents. This alarming statistic highlights the pressing need for increased law enforcement resources to protect our citizens.

The drug crisis has been a major contributor to this surge in violent crime. In 2021, Washington County accounted for 21 overdose deaths, representing 7% of the state's total, despite comprising only about 2.3% of Maine's population. This disproportionate impact emphasizes the critical need for additional law enforcement personnel to combat drug trafficking and related offenses effectively.

The presence of additional State Police officers would not only enhance our capacity to respond to incidents but also serve as a deterrent to criminal activities. It would enable more proactive policing, thorough investigations, and stronger community engagement, all of which are essential for fostering a safer environment.

I urge the committee to recognize the unique challenges faced by Washington County and to support LD 461. By allocating these additional resources, we can take a significant step toward ensuring the safety and well-being of our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Colleen Brown
Whiting, Main

Washington County Resident