

STATE OF MAINE

KATHRYN SLATTERY
DISTRICT I

JACQUELINE SARTORIS
DISTRICT II

NEIL MCLEAN
DISTRICT III

MAEGHAN MALONEY
DISTRICT IV



R. CHRISTOPHER ALMY
DISTRICT V

NATASHA IRVING
DISTRICT VI

ROBERT GRANGER
DISTRICT VII

TODD R. COLLINS
DISTRICT VIII

MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Rural Counties by Providing
State Police Patrol and Policing Services” LD 477
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Public Hearing Date: February 24, 2025
Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 477

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association. I write this testimony in support of LD 477.

The bill proposes much needed positions within Maine State Police for our rural counties. Police response time to ongoing emergencies is critical to the safety and wellbeing of our communities. As we all know, Maine is a large state that covers much geographical ground in our rural counties. This puts a higher demand on our officers to efficiently, but safely respond to emergency calls. Prosecutors are constantly listening to 911 calls that have been made by victims or witnesses in crimes as part of the State’s case-in-chief against a defendant. Police response times can take well over 20 minutes and this includes emergency police responses to domestic violence crimes. Prosecutors have listened to countless 911 calls from victims of domestic violence crying and pleading with dispatchers to have police arrive faster as they are hiding somewhere in their house for their life or the abuse is continuing until police arrive. Access to more law enforcement can have a direct impact on police response time to ongoing emergencies.

Our communities deserve and need more police resources to safely and effectively respond to emergency calls. For these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association is in support of LD 477.

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