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## **Maine Mayors Coalition Testimony on LD 726, An Act to Protect Municipalities' Investment in Law Enforcement Officers**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, the Maine Mayors Coalition is submitting testimony in opposition to LD 726, An Act to Protect Municipalities' Investment in Law Enforcement Officers.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of eleven Maine communities – Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, Waterville and Westbrook – and nearly 300,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

Should our cities hire full-time law enforcement officers whose training, either at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy or the Indian police academy at the federal law enforcement training center, was paid by a governmental entity, current state law requires us to reimburse the governmental entity for the cost of training. We must pay for the entire training costs if the hirings occur in the first year since graduation. After that, the percentage paid decreases incrementally over the next four years.

The Maine Mayors Coalition opposes LD 726 as it would double the amount reimbursed for each of those five years. The bill would not deter full-time officers from seeking employment with another law enforcement agency. Instead, it would penalize cities and towns struggling to find qualified candidates and force added costs onto already overburdened taxpayers. We urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 726.

Thank you for your time and your attention to our concerns.