



PENOBSCOT COUNTY
REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

Christopher J Lavoie
Director

Bradley B Fitzgerald
Deputy Director

To: Senator Joseph Rafferty
Representative Kelly Noonan Murphy
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

From: Christopher Lavoie, Director of Penobscot Regional Communications Center

Re: Testimony in opposition of LD 168, **An Act to Improve Safety in Public Schools by Requiring Silent Electronic Notification Systems in Classrooms**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Christopher Lavoie. I am the Director of the Penobscot Regional Communications Center (PRCC). Due to the wording of this bill, I am writing in opposition to LD 168, commonly known as "Alyssa's Law," in other states across the nation.

Penobscot RCC is Maine's largest Public Safety Answering Point, handling over 65,000 E9-1-1 calls, nearly 400,000 administrative calls, and over 1.6 million radio transmissions annually. We dispatch for 66 Police, Fire, and EMS agencies in three different counties. We also handle landline and VoIP E9-1-1 calls for Aroostook County.

For several years, Penobscot County schools have started implementing silent alarms or tip lines. Each school district expects our PSAP to monitor these tip lines and alarms, but they all use different vendors. As you can imagine, this creates a complicated situation for our staff who already have to manage six different computer screens to execute their daily functions. With over 100 schools in our coverage area and RSUs crossing county lines, this could create a catastrophic problem.

In Maine, we currently have the option to call or text 9-1-1. I firmly believe that utilizing a silent alarm could cause a significant demand in services both in response and training. The more tasks we continue to put on our Emergency Communications Specialists, the more people we need to hire. There is a considerable cost element, not only in the equipment at the schools, but in the Public Safety Answering Points as well.

If the committee would like to move this bill forward, I would suggest a stakeholder group with heavy involvement from Public Safety, specifically Public Safety Answering Points and Emergency Services Communication Bureau staff. A project of this magnitude will fail unless a methodical approach is taken to ensure success at the equipment level and to handle multi-jurisdictional concerns.

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