



**Maine Chiefs of Police Association**  
P.O. Box 264 – Oakland, Maine 04963-0264

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Chief Jason Moen - President

Chief Michael D. Tracy (Ret.), Executive Director, Tel: (207) 838-6583  
email: [mcopa@maine.rr.com](mailto:mcopa@maine.rr.com)      Web site: [www.mainechiefs.com](http://www.mainechiefs.com)

**Statement neither for nor against**

**L.D. 527, An Act to Establish Bail Officers to Administer the Maine Bail Code**

**Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

**March 17, 2025**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association neither for nor against LD 527.

The mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training, and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

Back in January of this year, Amanda Doherty of the Maine Judicial Branch briefed the Board of Directors of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association about needed reforms to Maine's bail process. The current system, which has been in place for years, is not working effectively to meet the needs of the Judicial Branch's mission. Some of the biggest challenges include a shortage of bail commissioners, delays in the receipt of paperwork and bail money, paperwork errors, and inconsistent authority decision-making. These results often stem from bail commissioners being overwhelmed and not having the necessary training to carry out their duties appropriately. Making changes to the current system is long overdue.

As stated in the bill's summary, this bill creates a new position of bail officer within the Judicial Branch to set and execute bail. The Maine Criminal Justice Academy would be required to collaborate with the District Court's Chief Judge to establish a training class for law enforcement

officers regarding the execution of bail bonds. The bill also authorizes the court to impose a surcharge for accepting bail payments made by credit card.

If this proposal were to move forward, bail officer positions within the Judicial Branch would be created and filled with individuals who have criminal justice experience and who would be focused solely on the bail processes. Additionally, as drafted, law enforcement officers would be used for some of the administrative tasks of bail bond completion and the collection of bail money. This mixed approach of having bail commissioners and bail officers will help address the issues stated above and the issues raised in the testimony from the Judicial Branch.

In February, the Board of Directors of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association voted in favor of taking a neither for nor against position on LD 527. Although we are supportive of the legislation's goal, our board members are concerned with potentially adding to the workload of an officer or jail staff by requiring them to set up bail and deal with financial transactions.

We appreciate the committee's review of our comments on LD 527.