



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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March 17, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF
SHERIFF DALE P. LANCASTER
MAINE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION**

**LD 219 – An Act To Limit Hypodermic Apparatus Exchange
Programs to A One—For-One Exchange**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee of Health and Human Services. My name is Dale P. Lancaster. I am the sheriff of Somerset County and the Immediate Past President of the Maine Sheriffs Association. I am providing this testimony on their behalf.

Maine's sheriffs have taken the position of Neither For Nor Against LD 219 – An Act To Limit Hypodermic Apparatus Exchange Programs to A One-For-One Exchange.

In 2022, sheriffs opposed the bill that brings us here today to further examine the impact of distribution of hypodermic apparatus. We shared stories from across the state that told of the dangers of discarded syringes on Maine's beaches, in our little league fields, and boat landings. These concerns have mushroomed into widespread reports of irresponsible needle disposal. In September 2024, the Maine Monitor quoted a resident as saying, "As a longtime resident of the Parkside neighborhood and an avid walker, the issue of randomly discarded needles is a major concern. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to take a walk through the neighborhood and not see several discarded needles."

The Portland Press Herald ran a story, also in September, with this quote from Portland Mayor Mark Dion, "Once upon a time it used to be a few needles scattered about, but now it seems to be pervasive," Mayor Mark Dion said. "It's of our own making. We're the ones distributing the needles, so I think the council has a responsibility to be assertive on the issue of needle waste."

The one-for-one program is an improvement; however, Maine sheriffs cannot endorse any program that enables illegal activity. Funding the distribution of free syringes when Maine jails are burdened with unfunded medically assisted treatment mandates, to support SUD residents, seems counter-productive.

Thank you for your consideration.