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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Gary Friedmann supporting

LD 996, An Act to Establish the Offense of Aggravated Operating Under the Influence Resulting in the Death of a Pet

Before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

Senator Bebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and members on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Gary Friedmann, and I represent House District 14, which includes Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine and Mount Desert. I come before you all today in support of **LD 996, An Act to Establish the Offense of Aggravated Operating Under the Influence Resulting in the Death of a Pet**.

I want to thank my colleague, Representative White, for sponsoring this bill because no one should be forced to suffer the loss of a pet due to gross negligence. A constituent of mine, Lisa McGlothlin, reached out to me recently to share her story about how a drunk driver stole the lives of her beloved fiancé and black lab. I can't even imagine how shocking and devastating it must be to lose two members of your family so suddenly and in such a violent manner.

When a human loses their life in such a tragic incident, the law recognizes that loss and charges whomever is at fault; yet there are no consequences when a pet is lost. This is an important gap in the law that must be addressed. Pets complete a family. They offer unconditional love and joy to their owners. The loss of a pet due to the careless act of an individual driving under the influence should be punished.

If passed, LD 996 would provide a tiny bit of solace to family members mourning the senseless loss of their family pet due to drunk driving. I urge your support.