



## **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 in opposition to**

### **L.D. 421, An Act to Eliminate Barriers to Reentry into the Community After Incarceration by Repealing Certain Driver's License Suspension Provisions**

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

**April 7, 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 President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in opposition to LD 421.

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.

This bill repeals provisions in Maine law that allow the court to suspend a person's driver's license, permit, privilege to operate a motor vehicle, or right to apply for or obtain a license for no more than five years if the person uses a motor vehicle to facilitate a variety of illegal drug activities. Some of those activities include the trafficking and/or furnishing of a scheduled or counterfeit drug; the aggravated trafficking and/or furnishing of a scheduled or counterfeit drug; the aggravated cultivating of marijuana; the unlawful furnishing of a scheduled drug; or the aggravated illegal importation of a scheduled drug.

These scheduled or counterfeit drugs include, but are not limited to, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, and synthetic hallucinogenic drugs. If an individual commits one or more of these illegal activities, they are guilty of committing anything from a Class D to a Class A crime.

Drug traffickers may use their vehicles to transport drugs to other states or within a community. The sale of illegal drugs many times occurs in the vehicle used by a trafficker. Traffickers depend on their vehicles and the ability to drive them to conduct illegal activities.

By allowing our courts to consider suspending a driver's license of a drug trafficker and furnisher, we can specifically target the means used in committing a crime. Suspending licenses is one way judges can hold offenders accountable for conducting illegal activities from their vehicles. Restricting the use of the vehicle reinforces the idea that committing a serious offense comes with profound consequences.

It is important to note that judges are not required to suspend an offender's driving privilege for the offenses listed in this bill. This tool is available to use if it is deemed appropriate. Lawmakers should not remove the ability for judges to send the message that using and driving a vehicle to traffic and furnish drugs will not be tolerated.

For these reasons, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association opposes the passage of LD 421. We respectfully ask members of the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass.