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Testimony of Director Lauren V. Stewart

TESTIMONY OPPOSED TO LD 1384: RESOLVE, DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO EXAMINE MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS INVOLVING PEDESTRIANS.

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am Lauren Stewart, Director of the Bureau of Highway Safety in the Department of Public Safety. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department in Opposition to LD 1384.

LD 1384 seeks a resolve to cause the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Transportation to review five years of motor vehicle crashes involving pedestrians. It directs the departments to report on nine factors regarding these crashes.

I have spoken with the Sponsor, Representative Macias, and have provided him with departmentally produced and publicly published documents that report on many of these factors, for which he was unaware that they currently exist. These reports include the State of Maine Pedestrian & Bicycle Crash History from 2019-2023; the Bureau of Highway Safety's 2024-2026 Triennial Highway Safety Plan; and the recently completed Vulnerable Road User Assessment. I also provided Representative Macias with a link to the State's Public Crash Query Tool, which is a web-based application that allows anyone to search for crashes and crash statistics including those in high-crash locations. I also advised that both departments often respond to requests for crash data and will provide non-personally identifiable data that is available to us upon request.

Finally, several of the factors requested in this bill are not elements that we collect on a crash report and we would be likely unable to obtain such subjective information, such as "visibility afforded drivers at the time of crash", the "attention of the driver or any factors creating driver distraction", or "any other factors relevant to understanding the cause of the crash".

For these reasons, we oppose LD 1384, and I thank you for your time today and I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

Buckle Up. Drive Safely.



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