



Maine Chiefs of Police Association

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Statement in opposition to

L.D. 1817, An Act to Implement the Recommendation of the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to Eliminate the Crime of Violation of Condition of Release

Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

May 5, 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 serve as President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD 1817.

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 legislation repeals a key provision of the Maine Bail Code that currently makes it a criminal offense for a defendant to violate the conditions of their release, whether on preconviction or post-conviction bail. While the courts would still retain the authority to revoke or modify bail in response to violations, we remain concerned about the broader implications of this legislation.

When an individual is alleged to have committed a criminal act, law enforcement may issue a summons or make an arrest. Arrests are often necessary when the nature of the offense presents a threat to public safety, the individual poses a risk of reoffending, or there is concern for their own well-being. In such cases, conditions of release are set to mitigate these risks and safeguard both victims and the wider community. These conditions are clearly communicated, and the consequences of violating them are understood.

Most crimes involve victims, and the conditions of release are often designed to offer immediate protection or reassurance to those individuals, while also preserving public safety. By removing the criminal penalty for violating bail conditions, this bill risks weakening those safeguards and diminishing the accountability of individuals released on bail.

As law enforcement officers, we are committed to supporting rehabilitation and encouraging individuals to make better choices. For example, someone arrested for operating under the influence may be released with a condition not to consume alcohol or use drugs. This is intended to discourage further harmful behavior and promote behavioral change. If there are no legal consequences for breaking those conditions, we lose an important tool for deterring repeat offenses and protecting the public.

In our view, passing this bill would reduce the effectiveness of bail conditions and compromise the safety of Maine's communities and crime victims. For these reasons, we respectfully ask that the committee vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1817.