



Sophie Warren
P.O. Box 1
Scarborough, ME 04070
Phone: (207) 450-0765
Sophie.Warren@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 STATE HOUSE STATION AUGUSTA,
MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

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Testimony of Representative Sophie Warren Presenting
**L.D. 1784, An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make
Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon, Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Hasenfus and respected colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. Thank you for the opportunity to present L.D. 1784, An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers.

This bill is a commonsense step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and public trust in Maine's law enforcement agencies. It ensures that all police departments, state, county, and municipal, make their operational policies and procedures publicly accessible on their websites and in printed form. When policies are updated, the bill requires that revisions be published within 60 days, with the publishing date clearly indicated.

The importance of this measure was brought to my attention by a public defense attorney who highlighted how time-consuming and inefficient it can be to access departmental policies. Requests can involve multiple follow-ups and unclear processes. L.D. 1784 aims to streamline this, ensuring that everyone, from legal professionals to members of the public, has easy and timely access to the information they need. It's a practical solution that aligns with how we expect government to operate: clearly, openly, and efficiently.

The public has a right to know the standards and procedures that govern how law enforcement officers operate in their communities. Greater access to these policies allows for informed public dialogue, supports consistent application of law enforcement practices, and reinforces the idea that policing is a public service carried out in the public's name.

The bill also supports and reinforces ongoing training efforts within law enforcement. It does not create a new training mandate, but instead builds upon the practices that already exist to keep officers informed and accountable. The requirement for agency leaders to certify annually to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy is intended to help ensure consistency across departments and uphold standards that are already part of the profession's expectations and in line with all other aspects of policy and procedure already requiring annual certification from the chief administrative officer of each law enforcement agency to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees, affirming that the agency is in compliance.

Importantly, the bill, through the sponsor's amendment, clarifies that none of these transparency requirements will compromise public safety or investigative integrity. Confidential intelligence and investigative record information protected under the Intelligence and Investigative Record Information Act will remain confidential, ensuring that sensitive law enforcement operations are not exposed. Additionally, it will ensure compensation for any paper copies are paid for by the requestor pursuant to current Freedom of Access Act regulations.

In sum, L.D. 1784 strikes an appropriate balance between transparency and operational integrity. It builds public confidence in policing, ensures officers are well-informed and well-trained, and reinforces the principle that law enforcement should operate with openness and accountability to the communities they serve.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass with the addition of the sponsor amendment on L.D. 1784. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.

PROPOSED SPONSOR'S AMENDMENT:
LD 1784, An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers

Amend **Sec. 3.** Of the bill as follows (changes highlighted):

§2808-B. Accessibility of policies and procedures

1. Publishing of policies and procedures. Except as provided in subsection 5, by ~~By~~ January 1, 2026, a law enforcement agency shall publish and make publicly available in clear and understandable language the agency's policies and procedures required under section 2803-B, including:

A. A summary of each key policy of the agency, including policies on use of force, de-escalation techniques and pursuit and any other key policies of the agency;

B. A comprehensive list of agency rules and guidelines governing law enforcement officer conduct, including any updates or revisions; and

C. Contact information for a member of the public to request access to information under paragraph A or B.

2. Format and accessibility. A law enforcement agency shall publish the information in subsection 1 in a manner that clearly labels the information as the agency's policies and procedures and states the date the policies and procedures were published. The information must be made available:

A. On a publicly accessible website in a readable format that allows the information to be downloaded. The information must be located on the agency's main website or a dedicated section of the website with no technical barriers preventing public access, including requiring a password or a fee; and

B. In a printed paper form accessible at the agency's headquarters or principal location of operations and be provided for no fee upon request from a member of the public. A law enforcement agency shall provide to a member of the public a printed paper form of the agency's policies and procedures under subsection 1 within 7 business days of the member of the public's request during normal business hours. If a printed paper form of the policies and procedures is not made available to a requesting member of the public within 7 business days of the request, the law enforcement agency shall inform the member of the public when the printed paper form will be provided.

3. Updates. A law enforcement agency shall publish under subsection 2 a revision of a policy or procedure under subsection 1 within 60 days of the revision, including a revision required by state law or internal agency protocol.

4. Agency compliance. No later than January 1st of every year, the chief administrative officer of a law enforcement agency shall certify to the board that the agency is in compliance with this section and section 2803-B, subsection 8.

Amend the bill by adding the following new Sections to the bill to read:

5. No dissemination of intelligence and investigative record information. A law enforcement agency may not disseminate a record that contains intelligence and investigative record information that is confidential in accordance with Title 16, section 804 and shall redact any record covered under this subsection from the policies and procedures published and made available as required by subsection 2.

6. Payment of costs. A law enforcement agency that provides written copies of policies and procedures pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph B, may charge a reasonable fee for the costs of producing the policies or procedures pursuant to Title 1, section 408-A, subsection 8

AMENDMENT SUMMARY

This amendment adds language to the bill to clarify that a law enforcement agency may not disseminate intelligence and investigative record information that is confidential in accordance with the Intelligence and Investigative Record Information Act. The amendment also clarifies that any costs associated with producing policies and procedures are subject to reasonable costs in accordance with the Maine Freedom of Access Act.