



Maine Chiefs of Police Association

P.O. Box 264 – Oakland, Maine 04963-0264

Chief Scott Stewart - President

Chief Michael D. Tracy (Ret.), Executive Director, Tel: (207) 838-6583

email: mcopa@maine.rr.com

Web site: www.mainechiefs.com

Statement in support of

L.D. 524, An Act to Reduce Trafficking in the State

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

November 14, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scott Stewart. I am the Chief of the Brunswick Police Department, and the newly elected President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Association in support of LD 524.

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.

The proposed amendment offered by the bill's sponsor updates Maine's criminal code to strengthen protections against child sexual abuse material, especially in the context of evolving technology. It provides key definitions currently lacking in statute such as "child sexual abuse material," "identifiable child," and "generative AI," and narrows the definition of "minor" to those under 16 years of age, except in cases involving compulsion. Additionally, it renames and broadens the scope of crimes related to possession, dissemination, and creation of such material to include AI-generated images that appear to depict minors in explicit conduct. Finally, courts would be allowed to infer a depicted person's age or identity as a child based on image content or expert testimony, expanding evidentiary standards beyond possession cases.

We appreciate the leadership of Representative Kuhn for bringing forward a proposal that reflects both the urgency and complexity of protecting children in the digital age.

As law enforcement professionals, we are witnessing firsthand how rapidly evolving technologies, particularly generative artificial intelligence and machine learning, are being misused to create, manipulate, and distribute obscene material that exploits children. These tools can generate realistic images and videos that appear to depict minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct, even when no actual child was involved in the creation. The harm, however, is no less real. These materials perpetuate abuse, normalize exploitation, and create new avenues for offenders to victimize children without detection.

This bill is a proactive and necessary step to close dangerous gaps in our current statutes. It updates key definitions to reflect the realities of today's digital landscape. It also strengthens the legal framework by renaming and expanding the crimes of possession, dissemination, and creation of child sexual abuse material, ensuring that AI-generated content is treated with the same seriousness as traditionally produced material when it meets the threshold of obscenity.

Importantly, this legislation was developed in close collaboration with the Department of Public Safety to ensure it is enforceable and practical for law enforcement officers across Maine. It provides clear guidance on how age and identity may be inferred or established through expert testimony, which is critical for successful prosecution. These updates will allow us to better investigate and charge offenders who exploit technology to harm children, and to do so with confidence that our laws reflect the seriousness of these offenses.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 524.