



**Maine Chiefs of Police Association**  
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**Statement in support of**

**L.D. 2090, An Act to Establish a One-year Probationary Period for Public Safety Dispatchers**

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

**February 11, 2026**

Senator Beebe Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Scott Stewart. I am the Chief of the Brunswick Police Department, and the president of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am providing testimony on behalf of the Association in support of LD 2090.

The Maine Chiefs of Police Association's mission is straightforward: to strengthen the working relationships among Maine's police leaders, to promote professionalism and consistent standards across the state, and to support the men and women who serve our communities every day. At the heart of that mission is a shared commitment to protecting life and property and upholding the values of our profession.

For municipal police departments, the effectiveness of our operations depends heavily on the skill and judgment of our dispatchers. They are the first point of contact for our residents, and they are the lifeline for our officers in the field. The role has changed dramatically over the years, and our training and expectations have evolved to match that reality.

Public safety communications is no longer an entry-level clerical function. What once required a single week of NCIC training now demands approximately four weeks of classroom instruction to obtain multiple certifications. After that, new dispatchers spend four to six months in on-the-job training with a field training officer, learning the policies,

procedures, and protocols needed to manage emergency and non-emergency calls for police, fire, EMS, and other municipal services. This is a complex, high-stakes profession, and municipal agencies feel the impact directly when a dispatcher is not fully prepared.

Even after completing formal training, dispatchers need additional time to build confidence and proficiency. They must learn to apply complex protocols, operate advanced technology, and make rapid decisions under pressure. A one-year probationary period ensures that dispatchers complete all required certifications, finish in-house training, and have time to demonstrate competency beyond the structured training phase.

For a municipal police department, this additional time is essential. It allows us to ensure that the people entrusted with officer safety and public communication are fully ready for the responsibility.

Dispatchers are the first link in every emergency response. The information they gather and the decisions they make directly affect the safety of our officers and the community. Mistakes can have life-or-death consequences.

A longer probationary period allows supervisors to evaluate performance across a full range of scenarios — from winter storms to summer traffic, from routine calls to critical incidents. This protects the public, protects our officers, and reduces municipal liability.

Training a dispatcher is a significant investment for any municipality. When a new hire leaves early or fails to meet expectations, the department absorbs the cost in the way of overtime, staffing shortages, and the need to restart the training process.

A structured probationary period supports workforce stability. It improves retention, strengthens job satisfaction, and helps ensure that the dispatchers who remain with the department are confident, capable, and committed.

Across the public safety profession, agencies recognize that true competency develops over an extended period. LD 2090 formalizes this understanding and creates consistency statewide. It protects the public, supports dispatchers, and strengthens the operational readiness of municipal police departments.

For these reasons, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association respectfully urges the Committee to support LD 2090.