

Testimony of Maine Association of Police Executive Director Paul Gaspar before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Wednesday February 11th, 2026

LD 2090 " An Act to Establish a One-year Probationary Period for Public Safety Dispatchers"

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Paul Gaspar and I am a resident of South Portland.

I am speaking in my capacity as Executive Director of the Maine Association of Police, or "MAP". MAP currently represents approximately 850 municipal and county law enforcement officers and public safety dispatchers throughout the state. Today, I speak neither for, nor against LD 2090 in its current form, however I have been in contact with Rep. Bunker, its sponsor and are hopeful for amended language to be forthcoming.

It has been a great opportunity to have spoken with Representative Bunker in regard to concerns that were brought by our dispatcher members. After discussions with Representative Bunker and hearing about a proposed amendment, we would certainly be in support of this bill in its amended form.

Our concerns with the bill as originally written, is that LD2090 would create an entirely new designation and requirement for public safety Dispatchers under Title 26. However, there already exists under Title 30-A, general guidelines related to probationary periods for both municipal and county employees, as well as the specific and additional probationary period specific to law enforcement officers. Following their certification from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

The concern expressed by MAP on behalf of its members include potential conflict with these existing probationary periods outlined in Title 30-A would conflict with the proposed bill and create some confusion in municipalities and counties who have already instituted their own guidelines within the allowances in the existing statutes and cause confusion during their hiring processes. These would also potentially conflict with existing collective bargaining agreements that mirror the specific requirements of each of the units we represent.

After communicating with Representative Bunker, we learned that there would be an onerous process to amend existing statutes that would require considerable changes to specific sections in Titles that are specific to all public safety dispatchers in all three of the state, county and municipal segments. The amendment, if proposed, will create the probationary period under Title 26 as originally drafted, however would provide guidance that will provide for a minimum/maximum period that would be applied specifically to those defined as public safety dispatchers. This minimum maximum of no less than 6 months, no more than 12 months would continue to allow some local control and still adhere to the requirements outlined in the bill.

We believe that this would satisfy the concerns we have expressed in most, if not all matters and in that eventuality, MAP would support this specific amendment and structure of LD2090 and advocate for the committee's "Ought to Pass" vote.

Thank You for your time and I will be happy to attend the work session on this bill.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Gaspar
Maine Law Enforcement Coalition/Maine Association of Police