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Testimony of Senator Donna Bailey supporting
LD 695, An Act Regarding the Laws of the State of Maine
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
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Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salsbury, and esteemed Members of the Committee on State and Local Government. I am Senator Donna Bailey, and I represent Senate District 31, which includes Buxton, Old Orchard Beach, and Saco. Today, I am pleased to offer testimony in support of Senator Pierce’s bill [LD 695](#), “**An Act Regarding the Laws of the State of Maine.**”

As I understand it, LD 695 is a concept draft that has been carried over to the current legislative session. With the Sponsor’s amendment, LD 695 seeks to establish the Legislator Residential Security Program. It also seeks to create and fund the Legislator Residential Security Fund with a one-time allocation of \$450,000.

Earlier this year, I offered testimony in support of another bill, LD 2121, that would add a layer of protection to public officials. For those who may not know, I have a long career in public service, spanning over 39 years. At different points, I have been an attorney, a guardian ad litem, a Probate Judge, a State Representative, and – currently – a State Senator. All that is to say, I am familiar with the increased attention, wanted or not, that public officials and those who make difficult decisions that affect people’s lives, often receive from the public.

As I told the Judiciary Committee for that bill: In January 2024, for the first time ever, I (and other colleagues) received a serious threat via email. The subject line of the email read, “You’re going to die,” and the body text of the email read, “I’m going to kill you and all of your child-raping friends.” Aside from the disturbing content of the email itself, just as unsettling was the anonymity of the sender.

Indeed, when I received that email, I did not know the sender – where they lived or who they were – and I did not know what they did (or did not) know about me. This situation left me feeling like I always had to look over my shoulder wherever I went – home, the State House, and everywhere in between.

Now that the case is closed, I’ll share with the Committee that, as a result of this threat to kill me (and others), this individual is currently serving time in a federal prison.

Some people might be thinking, well, it was one email from one person who is currently behind bars. I wish it were so simple. We are living through a historic moment of heightened political violence. It affects public officials at all levels of government in every state.

Sure enough, just months after receiving the death threat outlined above, I experienced another “first” in my own career: I received a bomb threat to my home. Again, my sense of comfort and security was disrupted on a quiet Saturday morning when the Chief of Police and Deputy Chief of Police knocked on my door and requested permission to sweep for explosives at my home after having received credible information of a bomb threat to my residence.

Shortly thereafter, I received another bomb threat to my home, and I had another visit from the local police to sweep my home for explosives. Following these incidents, I had to install a video security system at my home, where I was concerned not only for my own safety but also for the safety of my family and neighbors. It was an additional, expensive cost – one that I wish public officials did not have to pay for – merely for stepping up and serving the community.

Let me be clear: It gives me no joy or satisfaction to describe these experiences to all of you. I wish that we lived in a world in which an email, a letter, or a social media post did not convey the intent to cause serious harm – including death – to a public official. I wish that we lived in a world in which we did not have to install security or video surveillance cameras on our homes. But we do not.

For my own sake and my family’s sake, I had to install the security cameras. While I was able to install them, I fear for the lawmakers – no matter who they are or what party they belong to – who have not installed cameras because of the cost. There are different opinions about how much (or how little) Maine lawmakers earn. Regardless of your view, the cameras are costly, and they are rapidly becoming a necessity for public officials. And while we all make certain sacrifices to be here, we should not have to sacrifice our safety and security.

We need to add these layers of protection to the public officials – like you, like me – who are increasingly at risk.

Thanks for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions.



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