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MAINE PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION
SHIRA BURNS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“An Act to Prevent False Reporting Leading to Evacuation, Shutdown or Lockdown”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Public Hearing Date: March 6, 2023
Testimony in Support of LD 405

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Shira Burns and I represent the Maine Prosecutors Association. I am here to testify in support of LD 405.

Maine Prosecutors Association’s priority this session has been to address our criminal caseload in a multifaceted approach including supporting and advocating for the reclassification of criminal offenses to civil violations and opposing the enactment of new crimes. However, both of those are contingent on the proposition that the conduct doesn’t affect public safety or victim safety.

Today, we are in support of this new crime because it absolutely affects public safety and aligns with how we treat other conduct similar to this. The crime of Terrorizing, 17-A M.R.S. § 210, which prohibits a person to communicate a threat to commit or to cause to be committed a crime of violence dangerous to human life, is a Class D offense. However, if that communicated threat causes evacuation of a building or requires people to remain in a designated secured area, Terrorizing becomes a Class C offense. This bill would do the exact same thing to the crime of False Public Alarm or Report which incorporates the conduct of swatting, which Terrorizing does not.

For these reasons, the Maine Prosecutors Association supports LD 405 and thanks Senator Carney for her leadership.

Shira S. Burns, Esq.
Executive Director
Maine Prosecutors Association