



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Maine State Police
Traffic Safety Unit
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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

AGAINST LD 369

**An Act to Allow Repurposed Military Vehicles to Be Registered
and Operated on Maine Roads**

Senator Chipman, Rep. Williams, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police in Opposition of LD 369.

This bill aims to allow any demilitarized vehicle under 10,001 pounds to be registered and operated on a public way, without any regard to the adherence of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, NHTSA DOT crash testing or EPA pollutant requirements. Some military vehicles are specifically designed for off road use only and are not safe to introduce to Maine roads. Many military vehicles are much heavier and less nimble than their civilian counterparts. They are slower, are purpose built for combat and don't have some important safety systems like air bags, supplemental restraint systems, anti-lock brakes or stability control. They often have tires that are designed for traversing rugged terrain that are not DOT compliant for road use.

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These vehicles are well suited for battle and disaster relief, so they are currently allowed to be operated on a public way if they are owned and operated by government entities, like the military and law enforcement agencies. The limited use of these vehicles for emergency operations by specially trained personnel mitigates risks to the public, but to allow them to be operated by anyone for any purpose would certainly lead to unsafe conditions for all road users. The uniqueness of these vehicles that helps them absorb impacts and prevent blasts from intruding into the passenger compartment in combat situations creates disadvantages in maneuverability and crash worthiness. According to the Government Accountability Office there have been 3,753 tactical vehicle accidents, in non-combat operations in the US from 2010 to 2019. Of these, there were at least 123 deaths to our service members and nearly 1/3 of these crashes involved the Humvee platform. 25% of those crashes were rollovers and due to the limited overhead clearance and lack of other safety features, many military members struck their heads on the steel roofs of these vehicles causing significant head trauma and at times death. It should also be mentioned that when these military vehicles are involved in collisions with civilian vehicles the results can be catastrophic for the passengers in both vehicles. Many of these vehicles are structurally superior to other vehicles on the road meaning they become lethal weapons that can cause significant damage and or injuries, without sustaining much if any damage to themselves. Statistically it would appear as though you are almost 10 times more likely to die in a crash involving a military vehicle than in other forms of transportation.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 369
On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.

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