



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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April 10, 2023

L.D. 1301 – An Act Regarding Transition Coordination, Prisoner Attendance at Funerals, Furloughs, Visitation, Education and Discretionary Accounts at County Jails

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Scott Nichols. I am the Sheriff of Franklin County and 1st Vice-President of the Maine Sheriffs Association. I am here on their behalf.

Maine sheriffs discussed this bill and those present voted unanimously to oppose L.D. 1301 – An Act Regarding Transition Coordination, Prisoner Attendance at Funerals, Furloughs, Visitation, Education and Discretionary Accounts at County Jails.

In October of 2022, the Maine sheriffs conducted a survey to determine what percentage of sheriffs' offices were navigating staffing shortfalls. We learned that 93% of our sheriffs' offices were short-staffed. Additionally, each member of this committee has been educated on the critical funding shortages we're facing in our jails, as well as added rural patrol responsibilities. Maine counties are chronically overburdened.

Mandating a transition coordinator in Maine's jails does not seem like a nefarious proposal, however, it's simply another unfunded mandate. The bill goes on to mandate that each released inmate be provided with clothing, transportation, housing, substance use disorder treatment, and money for expenses and these are to be acquired using 'available resources'. While we believe the sponsor was well-intentioned when crafting this bill, these added mandates are unattainable without appropriate funding streams to fully support.

There are many facets of this bill that we would like to debate, but the ultimate message for this committee is that before widespread mandates are considered, we urge decision-makers to learn what is already in place, what is working, and where support can be provided to jails to support the good services already in place.

Maine sheriffs appreciate the opportunity to share our position of opposition for LD 1301, and we urge each of you to vote Ought Not To Pass. I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Sheriff Scott Nichols
1st VP, Maine Sheriffs' Association