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Testimony of Rep. Holly B. Stover presenting

**LD 1100, Resolve, to Modify Security Screenings in the State House and
Implement Security Screenings in the Burton M. Cross Building
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government**

Senator Nangle and esteemed colleagues of the State and Local Government Committee, I am Holly Stover and I represent House District 48, including the towns of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Edgecomb, Southport, South Bristol and Westport Island. I appear before you this afternoon to present **LD 1100, Resolve, to Modify Security Screenings in the State House and Implement Security Screenings in the Burton M. Cross Building.**

LD 1100 is a Resolve that seeks to remedy a long-standing issue of the lack of security in the Burton M. Cross Office Building. I have a long history of working in and attending meetings in this building, and I have never taken the lack of personal security for granted. As a State employee, I worked on the 4th floor of this building. There were instances where we had security alerts because of incidents involving a grievance from the public, a current or former employee, or in some instances, a domestic violence perpetrator. Those incidents only gave us "alerts" to be a little more cautious and aware of our surroundings. That is not a security system, and despite the hard work of the Capitol Police, there were no barriers between us and anyone who might have a grievance.

Throughout my 24 years working in Maine State Government, there was not one year that the safety and security of the Cross building was not a consideration and discussion. I served as the DHHS Director of Violence Prevention, working in domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking. In that role, I assisted victims of domestic violence who worked in all state offices. I would attend meetings regularly with human resources, Capitol Police, and victims to create formalized safety plans for how that employee could safely attend work, including parking, lighting, and seating arrangements. The cases involving employees that worked in the Cross building were some of the toughest because of the ability for an offender to roam freely about the building, even when active protection from abuse orders were in place.

In one such instance, an employee who worked in the Cross Office Building did have a protection order in place against her ex that included a no-contact order. There was a history of

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domestic violence involving physical violence and threats to kill the employee. The safety plan was in place, and everyone, including the employee, had done their part. The offender, in this case, knew the employee's schedule and knew she always used the stairs to go to lunch each day. He waited in the stairwell and trapped the employee. Fortunately, two of her coworkers came down the stairwell and knew about her domestic violence relationship. They did not stop but instead went to reach Capitol Police, who intervened and removed the offender. How this offender could easily maneuver around the Cross building was not resolved. Sadly, this situation could happen again and might not end so peacefully. That is my motivation for speaking to you today.

LD 1100 directs the Commissioner of Public Safety to implement certain security screening procedures for anyone entering the Burton M. Cross Building. This bill will limit the number of public entrances by requiring individuals entering the building to undergo a security screening. This bill also directs the Legislative Council to adopt rules to make certain changes to the security screening procedures for individuals entering the State House, including requiring all Legislators and legislative employees to undergo a security screening and prioritizing security screenings of certain individuals.

It is time to address the lack of security in the Burton M. Cross Building. This bill will ensure that employees, the public, and legislators can continue to use this building freely and with some certainty that your security will improve through the passage of this resolve.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.