

**TESTIMONY OF RICHARD MCCARTHY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

(Neither for Nor Against) L.D. 1280

“An Act to Invest in Maine’s Fire Service Training Facilities”

Presented by: Senator Curry

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE
AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hearing Date: Thursday, April 27th, 2023, at 1:00 PM in Room 436, State House

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

My name is Richard McCarthy, and I am the State Fire Marshal, I am here today representing the Department of Public Safety and the Office of State Fire Marshal to testify neither for nor against this bill.

As in any profession training is a critical part of preparation for the next challenge. This is incredibly important in all fields, but especially important when it comes to public safety positions. As an EMT or paramedic you practice to improve your skills to provide life-saving care to your patients. As a police officer you practice scenarios over and over to prepare for many different situations. And as a Fire Fighter you practice

all the situations that may arise at any time. The difference between these three very important jobs is where the training occurs. Police officers can attend the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, go to ranges to hone their skills. EMT's and Paramedics can perform much of their training in a classroom or lab. Fire Fighters need buildings to perform much of their training, which can be difficult. I remember when someone would donate an old building to the Fire Department, we would use the building over and over to practice. These donations did not happen on a regular basis, so it made it hard to keep all members trained adequately.

This is where this Bill comes into play, this bill would provide funding to build and repair fire training facilities across the State to allow departments a place to train safely. This training is critical to keeping those dedicated members trained to a minimum level. There is a shortage of fire fighters and there is a constant challenge to increase numbers of active members of departments. These training facilities will help departments train and hopefully retain members for years to come. We understand that this is not part of the Governors current budget, and the difficulties that this creates. But we support whole heartedly the investment in fire training facilities for fire fighters.

Thank you for your time today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time or during the work session.