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Testimony of Representative Grayson Lookner introducing
LD 1492, An Act to Increase the Transparency and Accountability of the
Maine Information and Analysis Center
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable colleagues on the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Grayson Lookner, and I represent House District 113 which includes part of Portland. I'm here today to present **LD 1492, An Act to Increase the Transparency and Accountability of the Maine Information and Analysis Center**.

The Maine State Police are as interested as anyone in making sure that they develop as much trust and allow for as much participation with the general public as possible. Public safety is a two-way street, and in order for the public to have trust, it is critical that there is transparency and accountability within the Maine Information and Analysis Center (MIAC).

Despite the actions of the Legislature in recent sessions, it is clear that not enough has been done to build this trust. The reporting requirements that have been implemented have resulted in reports that lack real substance and depth, and give the legislature and the public little idea of the true work that the MIAC is doing. In addition, there are real reasons to enact better oversight of MIAC's activities.

The Maine State Police recently lost a whistle-blower case¹ with a former MIAC employee who demonstrated that information was being unlawfully collected on Mainers engaged in protected 1st and 2nd Amendment activity. MIAC was facilitating the sharing of information between federal and state law enforcement agencies with few guard rails to determine if the sharing was appropriate. I commend the whistle-blower for standing up for their values and the civil liberties of Mainers.

¹ Hoey, D. (2022, November 28). Retired trooper who claimed whistleblower retaliation goes to trial Monday. Portland Press Herald. <https://www.pressherald.com/2022/11/28/retired-trooper-who-claimed-whistleblower-retaliation-goes-to-trial-monday/>

LD 1492 would create an auditor position with the Attorney General's office who would be able to report on the MIAC's activities without infringing on their ability to perform their mission. MIAC often shares information with private-sector entities who have little or no oversight concerning how they handle the information. This bill ensures that to the extent possible, that if information needs rises to the level of needing to be shared with private entities, then that information would be accessible to the public writ-large.

I also want to commend the Maine State Police for their willingness to work with me on this bill, and they are committed to building transparency and trust with the public as they perform their work. They may have more language to introduce to this bill to clarify the duties and roles that will be performed by this auditor, without divulging personally identifiable information nor federally designated confidential material. I look forward to working more with the Maine State Police to craft language that will protect the civil liberties of all Mainers, while ensuring more transparency within the MIAC.

Thank you for hearing my testimony, and I look forward to working with all of you on this committee to pass this legislation.