



Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

L.D. 2041, "Resolve, to Review Traffic Fatalities Occurring While an Operator Was Under the Influence and Subsequent Prosecution with Respect to Those Occurrences"

*Testimony Provided by Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
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January 17, 2024

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Shenna Bellows. I am Secretary of State and the chief motor vehicle officer. Thank you for the opportunity to offer our department's perspective in support of L.D. 2041.

From 2018 through the end of 2023, an average of 23 lives were lost annually in crashes Maine's roads, when a vehicle operator was operating under the influence. In 2020 and 2022, specifically, over 30 lives were lost due to the same set of circumstances. Without a doubt, those numbers should be zero.

With that idea in mind, we absolutely recognize the value of convening a commission to review the enforcement and prosecution of fatal crashes involving drivers operating under the influence. We also believe the proposal to create a set of best practices can only build on the progress realized to date through the inter-agency Impaired Driving Task Force and other counter-OUI initiatives here in Maine.

Given the BMV's expertise of motor vehicle law surrounding OUIs, the related data the bureau holds, and our experience dealing with the aftermath of OUIs, we would recommend at least two representatives from the bureau be added to the commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this proposal, and I am happy to answer any questions or provide any information you need.