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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
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04333-0111

RANDALL A. LIBERTY  
COMMISSIONER

**TESTIMONY OF**

**RANDALL A. LIBERTY, COMMISSIONER  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**In Support of:**

**LD 2045, An Act to Establish Training and Certification Standards for Probation and Parole Officers**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Randall Liberty, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC) providing testimony in strong support of LD 45, An Act to Establish Training and Certification Standards for Probation and Parole Officers. As further explained below, this is a department bill requiring that probation officers be certified by Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA). The Department thanks Representative Salisbury for sponsoring this bill on our behalf.

Currently, probation and parole officers are trained by DOC but are not certified through MCJA. This bill seeks to change that by requiring the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to establish training and certification standards, set requirements for board-approved courses, prescribe curricula and certify graduates of board-approved courses for probation officers and requires those officers to meet the training and certification standards established by the board. Under this proposal DOC would maintain its current responsibility to train probation officers and, under the transfer provisions in Section 7 of the bill, probation officers currently employed by DOC will be certified without a requirement to be retrained.

Probation officers have a dual role between risk reduction and case management, but they also have duties and responsibilities that resemble traditional law enforcement, such as the power to arrest. Certification through MCJA would bring probation officers in line with other law enforcement professionals in the state and allow MCJA to set standards for training and professionalism. Additionally, this proposal brings a greater level of accountability to the profession by providing a disciplinary mechanism for officers that fail to meet standards set by the academy. Currently, even if the department were to terminate an individual for misconduct, there is nothing preventing that individual from moving on to another law enforcement agency. Certification through MCJA addresses that issue by providing an oversight body that will keep individuals accountable when they move to other law enforcement agencies.

Although this is a department bill, we do have one requested amendment to address an issue that arose following the bill's submission. In speaking with our colleagues at MCJA it became clear that the effective date of January 1, 2025, would not provide enough time for the academy to implement the requirements of this proposal. Therefore, we respectfully request the implementation date be amended to July 1, 2025, and the provisional certification end-date be amended to October 1, 2025 in order to provide the academy with more time.

For the reasons stated above, the department respectfully asks for the committee's support in this proposal, with the minor amendments described.

This concludes my testimony.

I am happy to answer questions.



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