



STATE OF MAINE  
Department of Public Safety  
Maine State Police  
42 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine  
04333-0020

JANET T. MILLS  
GOVERNOR  
MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK  
COMMISSIONER

COL. WILLIAM G. ROSS  
CHIEF  
LTC. BRIAN P. SCOTT  
DEPUTY CHIEF

**Testimony of Lt. Col. Brian P. Scott  
131st Second Regular Session**

**IN OPPOSITION TO LD 2094 – RESOLVE TO REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
STAKEHOLDER GROUP TO EXAMINE AND IMPROVE THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND  
WELLNESS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**

Senator BeeBe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Lt. Col. Brian P. Scott, and I am here today to testify on behalf of the Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety in Opposition to LD 2094 – A Resolve to Require the Establishment of a Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers.

We sincerely thank and applaud President Jackson for presenting this bill on behalf of Maine Law Enforcement Officers and our communities. His support is humbling to say the least. Although we appreciate the concept, this bill would task a working group with an analysis to incentivize and find funding to recruit and retain law enforcement officers. However, the bill does not stop there. It would also require an analysis and to find funding for many other things to include:

- Mental and physical wellness programs for law enforcement;
- Community peace and crime deterrence;
- Current educational, social service, public health, criminal justice, drug enforcement, and the economic needs of communities and law enforcement entities;
- Media coverage in the state and the impact of media on public perception of law enforcement officers; and
- Current community policing, social services, and crime prevention programs throughout the state and recommendations for future programs to support peace keeping efforts.

The ask of this working group is very robust and would take hundreds of staff hours to complete. According to Wikipedia there are 430 towns, 23 cities, and 32 plantations and about 160 police departments in Maine. The study would require and assessment of each of these

communities and police departments for all of the categories listed above. We do not have properly trained staff or the staff capacity for such an undertaking. We would have to contract with an outside company that employs researchers, statisticians, report writers, surveyors and etc. to get the job done.

We are dealing with unprecedented low levels of staffing where we are very close to a crisis. Excluding last year, we had been seeing more employees retiring or resigning faster than we could recruit, hire, and train for several years. Although we have recently had some great progress with our own recruitment and retention, we are not out of the woods yet. While our staffing levels have gone down from about 370 troopers in the 1970's to only 335 today, our responsibilities have gone up. Maine has seen drug overdose deaths skyrocket, homicides more than double, and even though fatal car crashes went down in 2023, they still remain a concern throughout the state. The DPS has many incredibly hard-working individuals who are doing everything that they can to try and reverse these horrible trends, however they only have the capacity to do so much.

We also don't have the ability to predict when the next crisis will hit the state of Maine. We must be flexible and dynamic and shift priorities on the spot when unpredictable emergencies arise, so we may mitigate and reduce risks associated when such occurrences strike. Each time statutes require the DPS to take on additional duties without providing additional resources or staffing we are forced to stop doing something else that our training, education, and experience tells us requires our attention. We no longer have the ability to decide what the priorities are in making Maine a safer place to live, work and visit, as our priorities and deadlines are determined by state law, such as what this bill proposes. We have always prided ourselves on the fact the Department of Public Safety can do anything that we set our minds to, however we cannot do everything. Our capacity bubble has burst, and we can no longer take on additional duties without additional staffing and funding.

For these reasons I urge you to vote Ought No to Pass on this Bill.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.