



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936**

60 Community Drive | Augusta, ME 04330-9486

1-800-452-8786 (in state)
(T) 207-623-8428
(F) 207-624-0129

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither for Nor Against

LD 2094, Resolve, to Require the Establishment of a Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers

January 29, 2024

Sen. Beebe-Center, Rep. Salisbury and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I providing testimony neither for nor against LD 2094, on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association, which represents the interests of municipal government before the Legislature. The positions of the Association are established by our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), who are elected by the councils and selectboards of municipalities in each of Maine's 35 Senate districts.

Public safety in Maine, and law enforcement in particular, is an interconnected resource that is dependent on key shared state resources to effectively protect our communities. Municipal officials across the state in conjunction with public safety leadership have asked for help to recruit, train, and keep our public servants healthy regardless of where they serve.

Additionally, officials and law enforcement leaders with the Association have been working on efforts to raise awareness of critical issues facing agencies of all sizes and have asked this body and the administration to help us in this endeavor. The Association has worked with several public safety leaders to attempt create resources to support first responders statewide for their shared challenges. Those challenges have been expressed several times before this committee and to the legislature and now one of those efforts (LD 1857) sits on the Appropriations table waiting for this body to answer that unanimous plea from public safety.

Additionally, municipal law enforcement has worked with the Association and talented students from Husson University to design a recruitment campaign for law enforcement as a whole, with intent to draw trained recruits from other areas of the country who may be interested in the quality of life Maine has to offer, and the depth of law enforcement opportunities available. The official unveiling will come later this month, but you may view the effort at mainelawenforcement.com.

Officials are aware of what many issues facing law enforcement are and are seeking ways to rise all boats both rural and urban.

While officials think no harm can come from a study resolve to examine the system pressures for law enforcement, the membership of the proposed committee lacks the voice of agency leaders and municipal officials who provide incentive pay, negotiate contracts, and struggle with unequal community resources to provide enhanced offerings. While several police unions are represented, Maine Chiefs of

Police and Maine Sheriffs are not members, and officials do not understand why a “private law enforcement association” would be included in a conversation regarding public service training and investment. Officials hope this stakeholder group will steer clear of efforts to privatize public safety.

The Association asks that you add 4 additional members to make sure both leadership and fiscal authorities are part of the conversation. One designated by a statewide association that represents municipalities, one that represents county commissioners and administrators, and one member appointed by the Maine Sheriff’s Association and Maine Chiefs of Police Association respectively.