

TESTIMONY
OF
MICHAEL J SAUSCHUCK
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Criminal
Justice and Public Safety

Hearing Date: February 4th, 2025

**"An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and
Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions
of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years
Ending June 30, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"**

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing
Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Beebe-Center, Representative
Hasenfus, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.
My name is Michael Sauschuck, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety.
I am here today to testify in support of the biennial budget.

Overall Budget

Maine – like many states, both blue and red – is facing a tight budget environment. The
Mills Administration has spent months carefully developing a balanced budget proposal to
preserve the programs lawmakers and Maine people support, including education, revenue
sharing, public safety, higher education, and school meals, while also protecting the long-term
fiscal health of Maine.

Ultimately, we took a balanced approach: one that makes some investments - including
operational needs such as technology efficiencies, health and safety improvements, collective
bargaining impacts, etc. - that proposes some spending cuts, and that makes some targeted

revenue increases. We know these proposals are difficult and appreciate that you will consider them with an open mind.

We look forward to working with you over the coming months to enact a budget that supports our greatest asset of all: the people of Maine.

Departmental Overview

The Department of Public Safety was established to serve the people by providing, coordinating, and leading a responsive and comprehensive public safety system to protect their lives, rights, and properties. This broad mission is accomplished with 693 positions spread across 10 bureaus. The Bureaus are Administration, Capitol Police, Consolidated Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal's Office, Gambling Control, Highway Safety, Maine Criminal Justice Academy, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Maine State Police.

Initiatives Impacting Multiple Programs

Before discussing each of our programs individually I would like to start with the three items that impact multiple programs in our Department; increases to statewide technology services, reclassification/reorganizations, and funding provided to align with anticipated revenues. We have included a supplemental document (page 4) for reference and to assist you in navigating the budget document to find where each of these items can be located.

Statewide Technology Services

Increases to statewide technology services impact the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services. Funding

is provided for these increases in Administration – Public Safety (A-576), Background Checks - Certified Nursing Assistants (A-578), Bureau of Capitol Police (A-579), Computer Crimes (A-581), Consolidated Emergency Communications (A-582), Criminal Justice Academy (A-583), Drug Enforcement Agency (A-586), Emergency Medical Services (A-588), Fire Marshal Office (A-591), Gambling Control Board (A-593), and Licensing and Enforcement (A-597).

Reclassification/Reorganization

There is a longstanding process in place to evaluate proper classification of positions and determine, through a functional job analysis, whether a position meets the requirements for reclassification, including pay adjustment. The State’s collective bargaining unit agreements include negotiated language related to this process. Reclasses may be employee or management initiated. Approved employee-initiated actions include a retroactive pay component back to the date the request was signed. Only approved reclasses are included in our budget requests. These initiatives are to request funding for the approved action, which is required before the reclassification can be processed and paid. These two initiatives are located in Computer Crimes (A-581) and Fire Marshal Office (A-592).

Anticipated Revenue Alignment

There are a number of initiatives in the department providing funding to align with anticipated revenues and these adjustments are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee. Funding for these alignments is being requested for Bureau of Capitol Police (A-579), Criminal Justice Academy (A-583), Drug Enforcement Agency (A-586), Emergency Medical Services (A-588), Gambling Control Board (A-593), and Highway Safety (A-596).

**Department of Public Safety Supplemental Document to Biennial
Budget Testimony**

Increases to Statewide Technology

- Administration – Public Safety (A-576)
- Background Checks - Certified Nursing Assistants (A-578)
- Bureau of Capitol Police (A-579)
- Computer Crimes (A-581)
- Consolidated Emergency Communications (A-582)
- Criminal Justice Academy (A-583)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (A-586)
- Emergency Medical Services (A-588)
- Fire Marshal Office (A-591)
- Gambling Control Board (A-593)
- Licensing and Enforcement (A-597)

Reclassifications and Reorganizations

1. Computer Crimes (A-581) - Provides funding for the approved range change of 9 Computer Forensic Analyst positions from range 27 to range 28.
2. Fire Marshal Office (A-592) - Provides funding for the approved reclassification of 12 Public Safety Inspector II positions from range 20 to range 25 retroactive to June 27, 2023.

Provides Funding to Align with Anticipated Revenue

- Bureau of Capitol Police (A-579)
- Criminal Justice Academy (A-583)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (A-586)
- Emergency Medical Services (A-588)
- Gambling Control Board (A-593)
- Highway Safety (A-596)

Administration - Public Safety

I will begin today on page A-576 with Administration- Public Safety Program. This Program is the Commissioner's Office, and it oversees the activities and programs of the bureaus and offices, undertakes comprehensive planning, develops and implements procedures and practices to promote economy and coordination within the department and actively seeks cooperation between the department and all other law enforcement entities in the State. The office houses the public information office and coordinates with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services for information technology, financial, and human resource services.

The first initiative on page A-576 establishes one Public Service Coordinator I position and provides funding for related all other costs. The Commissioner's Office currently only has three positions: the Commissioner, Assistant to the Commissioner, and the Public Information Officer. This is a very low number for a department with ten bureaus and almost 700 employees. This position will assist in rulemaking, department-wide training, procurement processes such as redlining, grant applications, grant management, and operationalizing other crucial public safety initiatives in a timely and efficient manner.

The second initiative on page A-577 provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

Background Checks – Certified Nursing Assistants

The next program Background Checks - Certified Nursing Assistants, begins on page A-578. This program within the State Bureau of Identification implements and maintains a system

to perform fingerprint-based background checks for individuals who enroll and complete the courses to become a Certified Nursing Assistant for the Maine Registry of Certified Nursing Assistants. The only initiative in this program is the increase in technology costs mentioned earlier.

The initiative on page A-578 provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

Capitol Police – Bureau of

The next program, the Bureau of Capitol Police (Capitol Police), begins on page A-579. The Capitol Police is a full service law enforcement agency responsible for the safety of the people and the security of the buildings that make up Maine's seat of government. The Capitol Police patrol the State owned or controlled property in Augusta, enforces laws, including parking and traffic regulations, and respond to alarms and other calls for help or assistance on two campuses. The Capitol Police night watchpersons check the security of approximately 50 State owned buildings and properties in Augusta and Hallowell at night and on weekends.

The Department of Health and Human Services contracts with Capitol Police to provide law enforcement and security at the Riverview Psychiatric facility. This program is staffed by one Sergeant and 4 officers.

The first initiative for this program establishes a two-year limited period position Capitol Security Agent to complete a phased staffing of the new area of responsibility for the Capitol Police at the Cultural Building. The Cultural building renovation project included extensive

changes to the museum, archives and library areas of the building. Additional security enhancements were requested by building leadership. This is a limited period ask because we want to actively assess patronage usage data before determining the appropriate level of staffing coverage. It should be noted that the library area is our primary concern as the space is heavily used by the public and disturbances have occurred.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The third initiative found on page A-579 provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

Computer Crimes

The next program, Computer Crimes, begins on page A-581. Since its inception in 2000 as a task force, the unit has investigated thousands of cases of child exploitation and analyzed the associated computers and data storage devices. Additionally, the Unit has evolved into the State's technology support solution for criminal investigations to include fraud, theft, threatening, robbery, stalking, child abduction and homicide cases. This program has two initiatives that were explained earlier and can be found on page A-581.

The first initiative provides funding for the approved range change of 9 Computer Forensic Analyst positions from range 27 to range 28.

The second initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services

Consolidated Emergency Communications

The next program, Consolidated Emergency Communications, begins on page A-582. The Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau was created in 2004 by legislation for the purpose of providing consolidated emergency communications to state, county and local public safety agencies. This Bureau operates three Regional Communications Centers that provide both Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) emergency call taking and emergency dispatch services for police, fire and emergency medical services. The Bureau provides dispatching services for state entities, including the Maine State Police, Marine Patrol, Environmental Protection, Warden Service, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, the State Fire Marshal's Office, Division of Forestry, and the Maine Turnpike Authority. The first initiative in this program is the increase in technology costs mentioned earlier.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The second initiative provides funding for an annual software subscription for Rave Link. This

software allows Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) sharing among agencies in real-time, reducing the time to call a center, increasing situational awareness, and improving officer safety. It also allows for text message specialty teams call outs, such as the tactical team or bomb team as necessary.

Criminal Justice Academy

The next program to be discussed, Criminal Justice Academy (the Academy), begins on page A-583. The Academy is the facility for training and certification of all criminal justice personnel which includes the basic training program for law enforcement officers, correctional officers, emergency communications dispatchers, judicial marshals, harbor masters and shellfish wardens. It is the training facility for all in-service classes which include supervision and executive training, tactical and evidence collection training and many specialized instructor development training courses.

In addition to the full-time staff, the Academy relies heavily on volunteer instructors from state, county and municipal law enforcement agencies, county and state corrections agencies and other criminal justice fields. The Academy provides many instructor development classes in order that these students can be the future volunteer instructors. This partnership philosophy has been supported by the Police Chiefs and Sheriffs in Maine to provide very cost-effective training to their respective agencies.

The first initiative establishes a paralegal position and provides all other costs. This position is necessary to assist with the exponentially increasing caseload of Board of Trustees disciplinary matters as well as a drastic increase in FOAA requests.

In 2023, the Academy received 72 reports of disqualifying conduct or criminal convictions which at the time were an all-time high. In 2024, the Academy received 90 such cases that ranged

from possession of child pornography to gross sexual assault.

Additionally, in November of 2024 a “Standard of Conduct” was adopted under Chapter 15 in Rulemaking. This chapter establishes standards of conduct for certificate holders or applicants for a certificate, the violation of which will constitute grounds for imposing discipline pursuant to 25 M.R.S. § 2806-A(5)(M).

This could impact and increase the number of complaints that will be reported under this provision. The challenge to the Academy is that we have no personnel to investigate or properly follow up on these reports. This has placed a significant burden on the Academy administration.

Over the past 8 years FOAA requests have gradually increased from 750 annually with over 1,000 in 2024 alone. These requests are currently being handled by training coordinators and this position would be able to take on these responsibilities so that the training coordinators can focus on the tasks that best match their skill set.

The next initiative provides funding for the increase in cadre contracts for municipal officers and county deputies from \$15,000 to \$30,000 per class. The Maine Criminal Justice Academy hires four municipal /county cadres twice a year for the two Basic Law Enforcement Training Programs at \$15,000 per class. This amount works out to be approximately \$18-\$19 an hour while entry level pay at most departments is approximately \$30 an hour. Furthermore the candidate sought as Cadre should be a seasoned veteran, supervisor, or training officer which would put the candidate well above entry rate. The municipality or county is absorbing the costs of the Cadres above the \$15,000 per class that they are currently reimbursed for.

The third initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to

\$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The fourth initiative provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

The final initiative provides funding for the increase in airport rental costs for the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program Emergency Vehicle Operations Course. The Norridgewock Airport is rented for six weeks a year for this course and the cost has increased by about \$200 a day.

Maine Drug Enforcement Agency

The next program, the Drug Enforcement Agency program, begins on page A-586. The Maine Drug Enforcement Agency (MDEA) is a statewide multi-jurisdictional task force, with personnel assigned to the task force by municipal, county, state and tribal law enforcement agencies. MDEA's mission is to disrupt the drug market, which undermines the ability of drug suppliers to meet, expand, and profit from drug demand while supporting prevention efforts and contributing to treatment efforts through a collaborative state-wide drug enforcement effort. This program has two initiatives that were explained earlier.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The second initiative provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number

of these adjustments in the department and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

Emergency Medical Services

The next program, Emergency Medical Services, begins on page A-588. The Maine Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program serves as the primary regulatory body for EMS including, but not limited to, training, emergency medical dispatchers (EMDs), EMD centers, equipment, EMS clinicians, vehicles, services, and clinical care protocols for the EMS system in the State of Maine. In doing so, Maine EMS assists, coordinates and delivers training programs for EMS clinicians, EMS administrative staff, and emergency medical dispatchers. Maine EMS works to convene a diverse group of stakeholders throughout the state to collaborate and solve some of these system's most pressing issues. The budget allocated to Maine EMS allows for continued programming including quality assurance/improvement projects, community paramedicine projects, clinical oversight, management of health data, trauma system management, education oversight, inspections and investigations.

The first initiative continues a number of limited-period positions within the bureau of Emergency Medical Services associated with the substance use disorder team as that work will continue into the next biennium with **all four of these positions being federally funded.**

The second initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The third initiative establishes one Comprehensive Health Planner II position to support community paramedicine and critical care programming statewide. With the addition of three new license levels in October with the Community Paramedicine rule there will be an increase in workload for Education, Licensing, and Community Paramedicine. This position is critical to the success of the continued growth in Community Paramedicine programs in Maine and the current projection estimates an additional sixty (60) agencies will be adding this program in 2025-2026 with more than half of the two hundred and fifty-nine (259) Maine EMS licensed agencies projected to have similar programs in place by 2030.

The fourth initiative establishes one Emergency Medical Services Licensing Agent position which will assist with the increased license questions, complaints, and investigations created by the three new license levels mentioned in the third initiative above. The massive increase in agencies conducting this innovative work and the need for their EMS professionals to be licensed in it will increase the need for investigations across the board.

These agents currently have 40 pending investigations that vary from relatively simple transgressions to one investigation report last year that totaled approximately 630 pages.

The fifth initiative provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department, and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

The final initiative continues and makes permanent one Emergency Medical Education Training Coordinator position. Maine Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is currently collaborating with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as well as the Department of Labor to create learning opportunities for young persons (ages 18-24) throughout the State of Maine to learn more about and to get involved with emergency medical services. Through this collaborative, DHHS was

able to locate limited funding to support the creation of a position within Maine EMS to support these efforts. Unfortunately, the funding source is no longer available; however, the need for this position will continue to persist as the program has been built and will require ongoing support, refinement, education, training, and outreach. The aging core of our EMS providers is a primary concern and a dedicated staff person will be essential in further enhancing our youth oriented recruitment efforts.

Fire Marshal - Office of

The next program is the Office of the Fire Marshal, beginning on page A-591. The primary mission of the office is to protect the lives and property of those who live, work, or visit the state. The Inspection Division is primarily responsible for the safety of people at public events; in buildings used by the public; in places of assembly; and in healthcare and childcare facilities. The Investigation Division is primarily responsible for the investigation of fires and explosions. They also regulate the storage of explosives, the storage and use of fireworks, and investigate accidents involving mechanical rides.

The first initiative provides funding to purchase two (2) hybrid vehicles for the Fire Marshal's Office. This request is necessary to stay on pace with the Fire Marshal Office's established vehicle replacement schedule of two (2) vehicles a year.

The second initiative establishes one Fire Investigation Sergeant position to oversee the professional development of staff, oversee all training activities, act as a liaison for agencies requesting training programs, monitor mental health initiatives, and establish a statewide juvenile fire setter intervention program. This position will focus on the health and wellness of employees and is aimed to address many concerns outlined in the recent OPEGA report.

The third initiative provides one-time funding for the purchase of a new command vehicle.

The current command vehicle is twenty years old and is a class c motorhome that was gifted to the office many years ago and converted to a command vehicle. The chassis is not designed to withstand the rigors of continued use and it has been necessary to make some major repairs to keep this vehicle operating. The command vehicle was called out 25 times last year and is often on scene for days at a time so it is important to have a vehicle that is reliable to support the efforts of our Fire Investigators. **We are using the Fire Marshal Special Revenue Fund for this critical one-time expenditure.**

The fourth initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The final initiative provides funding for the approved reclassification of 12 Public Safety Inspector II positions from range 20 to range 25 retroactive to June 27, 2023.

Highway Safety DPS

The next program, Highway Safety, begins on page A-595. The Bureau of Highway Safety promotes behavioral driver safety programs and projects designed to make Maine's roads and highways safe. These programs consist of motor vehicle occupant restraint, child restraint, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, speed enforcement, and the Maine defensive driving program. The bureau also is responsible for the annual planning, development, implementation and evaluation of the Highway Safety Plan for Maine.

The first initiative reallocates the cost of one Contract Grant Manager position and one Director of Bureau of Highway Safety position from 100% federal expenditures fund to 50% federal

expenditures fund and 50% highway fund. This reallocation is necessary because there was a federally mandated change in matching requirements, so it is no longer viable to fund these two critical positions 100% through federal grants.

The second initiative establishes one Highway Safety Coordinator position to meet a federal requirement which states that State Highway Safety Offices must conduct ongoing public participation and engagement in those areas that are deemed low income or extremely rural and have a high number of fatal crashes. **This is a federally funded position** which is funded through the State and Community Safety Grants Program which supports a number of highway safety programs designed to reduce traffic crashes and the resulting deaths and injuries.

The third initiative on page A-596 provides funding to purchase breath testing devices to replace the old Intoxilyzer 8000's with Intoxilyzer 9000's and **the equipment will be purchased using National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Federal Funds.**

The final initiative provides funding to align with anticipated revenues. There are a number of these adjustments in the department and they are being requested to either align the funding with federal grant revenue or to adjust funding to align with revenues as recommended in the December 1, 2024 forecast of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

Licensing and Enforcement - Public Safety

The Licensing and Enforcement Unit begins on page A-597. This unit within the Bureau of the Maine State Police is responsible for the licensing functions associated with private investigators, private security guards and concealed firearm permits. The first initiative in this program is the increase in technology costs mentioned earlier.

The first initiative provides funding for increases to statewide technology services and impacts

the majority of the programs in the department. With the increase in MaineIT Rates the Department of Public Safety will experience an 18% increase in costs from \$6.6 million to \$7.8 million to maintain current services.

The second initiative provides funding for the Maine State Police Weapons and Professional Licensing Unit to purchase software. The system that is currently being used to issue permits was internally developed by MaineIT and is very outdated. The search features are not consistent and therefore unreliable and paper permits currently need to be entered manually. The new system will allow the applicant to fill out their application online while still maintaining the ability to enter the information manually. This will be funded through the increase in fees outlined in Part VVV of the language document.

Safe Homes Program

The final program is the Safe Homes Program and can be found on page A-598. The Safe Homes Program was established and is administered by the Department to support the safe storage of prescription drugs, firearms, and dangerous weapons in homes or public spaces. There are no initiatives related to this program.

Language Part UUU

This language part can be located on the language document on page 121. It increases the number of majors the Chief of the State Police may appoint from 2 to 3 to support the establishment of a third major position in Public Law 2023, chapter 643.

Language Part VVV

This language part can be found on page 122 and increases the fees charged to an individual applying for or renewing a permit to carry a concealed handgun to help fund an updated system for issuing permits. This also amends the provision that directs a portion of the collected fees to the Treasurer of State by increasing the amount paid to the Treasurer of State which will allow the increased fees to be used for the updated system.

Language Part XXX

The final language part I will be testifying on today is located on page 124 and authorizes the State Controller to transfer \$2,400,000 from the Department of Public Safety, Administration-Public Safety, Other Special Revenue Funds account to the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund on or before June 30, 2026. Funds were transferred to this program in Public Law 2023, chapter 643, Part VVV to fund certain first responder overtime costs associated with the Lewiston mass casualty tragedy on October 25, 2023 and the subsequent apprehension operation. All initial requests for reimbursement have been processed by the Department of Public Safety. This balance will not be used for the authorized purpose.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.