



Janet T. Mills
Governor

Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE STATE POLICE

45 Commerce Drive - Suite 1
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COL. Bill G. Ross
Chief

LTC. Brian P. Scott
Deputy Chief

Testimony of Lieutenant Thomas Pickering
Maine State Police

OPPOSED LD 172

An Act to Require the Maine State Police to Create a Statewide List of Missing Persons
Sponsored by Rep. Milliken
Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and other distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Lieutenant Thomas Pickering and I am here representing the Maine State Police and the Maine Department of Public Safety and to testify in OPPOSITION to LD 172.

Current Maine Law (Title 22 SS 3034) requires all Maine Law Enforcement to report all missing persons to the Maine Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Currently, no requirement exists to report all missing persons to the Maine State Police. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner currently enters those missing person into NAMUS (National Missing and Unidentified Persons System). The website is an official website of the United States Government, Department of Justice. This public website exists to cross reference missing persons in one jurisdiction with recovered remains from another jurisdiction. The website is a very effective tool for making connections between the missing person from Maine and the recovered remains from California as an example. This website is a public list.

Between 2015 and 2018, the Maine State Police and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner worked diligently to reconcile missing persons cases between the two offices and to obtain biological samples from those next of kin in the event that potential remains are recovered. Several members of the Major Crimes Unit were part of that effort along with several at the Medical Examiner's Office. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner continues to be the official repository in Maine for keeping this list because of their obvious connection to the recovery of remains within the state and the statutory mandate for reporting to them.

There is a link from the Chief Medical Examiner's website to the NAMUS website, which can be accessed by any inquiring party. Though this list is not on a Maine.gov website it is a published list of Maine missing persons. The easiest way forward would be for any published list to exist on the Chief Medical Examiner's Maine.gov website. I have spoken with Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in the past and they would need to hire additional administrative support to support a missing persons list published on their Maine.gov website.



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All Maine law enforcement agencies investigate missing persons cases and would remain the primary investigating agencies for those investigations that occur within their respective jurisdictions. The current Maine State Police missing person list that is published is a list of **suspicious** missing persons investigations where the Maine State Police is the investigating agency.

It is for these reasons that we OPPOSE LD 172.