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Testimony of Representative Nina Milliken presenting

**LD 172, An Act to Require the Maine State Police to Create a Statewide List of Missing Persons
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**

Hello Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and friends and colleagues on the best committee in the Maine Legislature, Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Nina Milliken and I am honored to represent the people of the towns of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House. I am happy to be here today to present to you **LD 172, An Act to Require the Maine State Police to Create a Statewide List of Missing Persons**.

This bill is a simple bill, the title of the bill is only about half as long as the language of the bill itself. It requires that the State Police, in cooperation with all law enforcement agencies across the state, maintain a publicly available list of all missing persons in the state. Currently, if a person goes missing in Bangor, for example, that person would be listed as a missing person through Bangor Police Department. If a person goes missing in Lewiston, they'd be listed with Lewiston Police. And if a person goes missing in my small town of Blue Hill, it would depend on when they went missing, as they could be listed under Hancock County Sheriff's Office or Maine State Police depending on the day. This, of course, means that the State Police has and maintains a list of missing persons. But this list is not the entire list of missing persons in Maine. It is simply the list of persons who went missing where the state police was the agency of jurisdiction, or where the agency of jurisdiction handed the case over to the state police.

While this may be how it has always been done or how it has been done for some time, families of missing persons who believe their loved one could be anywhere in Maine would like to see an easily accessible list of all missing persons in Maine that is in one, concise location. I would imagine it feels harmful to look at the Maine State Police's list of missing persons and not see your loved one who went missing in a place with a municipal department. Additionally, we live in an age of social media and internet detective work. Online sleuths want an easy to access and complete list. And, as we don't have a great system for alerting the public to missing persons (billboards are prohibited and milk cartons are no longer a popular option), it feels prudent that we use whatever tools we have available to help these families find their loved ones as quickly as possible.

I might suggest a slight amendment to the bill to require that, in addition to creating and maintaining the list, there be some attempt made to regularly notify the public when a new person is added to the list and to update as time goes on. In September, a young woman from New Sweden named Stefanie Damron went missing. It would be useful, I think, for the public to be reminded of her case and shown her image every month or more so we all continue to look for her.

District 16: Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton

I appreciate your time and consideration and am happy to try to answer any questions.