



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Michel Lajoie

279 Old Green Road

Lewiston, ME 04240

Cell: (207) 713-7119

Michel.Lajoie@legislature.maine.gov

March 10, 2025

Testimony of Representative Michel Lajoie presenting

LD 723, An Act Requiring the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to Develop a Nonresidential Basic Law Enforcement Training Program

before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good morning Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and fellow honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Michel Lajoie, and I represent House District 96, which includes a portion of Lewiston.

I am here before you today to introduce **LD 723, An Act Requiring the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to Develop a Nonresidential Basic Law Enforcement Training Program**. The need for this bill was brought to my attention by the Auburn Police Department, the Maine Municipal Association, and several police chiefs in District 1. Current statute governing basic law enforcement training specifies that in order for an individual to meet the curriculum requirements, the training must take place in a residential setting. However, the evaluation of out-of-state police certification is based on a review of curriculum alone, with many of those training programs being non-residential programs. These candidates are accepted as meeting Maine standards and certified as Maine officers. Maine residents must attend an 18 week residential academy making it effectively easier to attract mature out-of-state applicants than mature Maine residents with a desire to serve.

LD 723 would add a non-residential option to the existing statute and would provide additional staffing resources to the Board of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy for the purpose of evaluating and developing curriculum for a non-residential basic law enforcement training program as a means of increasing candidate recruitment. Requiring candidates to commit to a residential program is a barrier to some individuals pursuing a career in law enforcement.

Further, a non-residential model would help meet staffing requirements by attracting a broader pool of members of the community who may be excellent officers but who are also primary caregivers for young children or aging parents that simply cannot find the coverage or support they would need to complete an 18-week training away from home.

Allowing the Board of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to evaluate and develop the curriculum will ensure that standards for training outcomes are maintained and in consultation with the communities they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you have.