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Governor

STATE OF MAINE  
*Department of Public Safety*  
**MAINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY**  
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Michael J. Sauschuck  
Commissioner

Jack D. Peck, Jr.  
Director

I

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

My name is Jack Peck, and I am the Director of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA) and I am here today to oppose L.D. 723 an Act to Requiring the MCJA to Develop a Nonresidential Law Enforcement Training Program (NLTP).

This bill seeks to attract more people into the law enforcement profession by developing a NLTP. The Basic Law Enforcement Training Program (BLETP) has evolved over many years, has seen numerous revisions, and specifically developed to bring all of Maine's Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs) under one unified training program. This Committee created the construct and developed the enabling statutes that provided the guidance to establish the current successful program. The BLETP was developed with the intent to train Maine's LEOs to the highest standards, unify and build interagency competence and cooperation, and further develop the relationships between the officers and agencies that serve Maine's citizens.

Maine law enforcement agencies are experiencing staffing shortages which adds pressure to their current staff. The MCJA estimates that there are roughly 250 to 300 full time police officer vacancies across the state. The NLTP has been presented to the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy as a request to study the option by the Maine Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA) in late 2022. After an extensive review, the Board found several structural, operational, and logistic obstacles that did not warrant further consideration. The findings of the study were presented to the MCOPA and the members ended the request. The Board did agree to bring the option back for consideration if new data presented a reason to reconsider.

Additionally, in November 2024, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy was awarded the 2024 Safer Outcomes grant through the COPS office (\$500,000 in funding) to integrate de-escalation and crisis response training in the BLETP. This project will include conducting an updated job task analysis (JTA) / needs assessment for full-time Maine law enforcement officers which will inform a new curriculum appropriate for policing in 2025 and beyond. During this JTA process, Academy staff expect to gather additional information about current industry needs and what appropriate BLETP curriculum and model is indicated in the future. If a NLTP model is appropriate, the Board of Trustees and Academy staff will appropriately consider this option.

I do not believe that a NLTP is the answer to the overall recruitment issues faced by police agencies in the State of Maine. However, the Board and DPS are committed to working with our partners to find resources to assist with recruitment and retention.

I wish to thank this committee for your time and support, and I will try to answer any questions you may have.