

MERRILLS

INVESTIGATIONS & SECURITY

LD-534, "An Act to Clarify the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Regarding Professional Investigator Communications (March 17, 2025)

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Zach Carleton, I am a resident of Turner, a Combat Veteran, a Licensed Professional Investigator in Maine for 16 years, and the Director of Field Operations at Merrill's Investigations and Security. I am testifying today in opposition to LD-534.

Founded in 1986, Merrill's Investigation and Security has spent the past 39 years building our reputation as the best, most reliable, and easiest to work with investigation and security firm in the industry. In 1999 the company added security and executive protection to its suite of services. Today, Merrill's is one of the largest providers of investigative and security services.

As an individual Investigator, and a company that conducts business here in Maine, we have some serious concerns with the way this bill is written. We believe there are some unintended consequences, and this will negatively impact the way we do business. I, and We, believe this bill is unnecessary.

All of the people who conduct business as Professional Investigators in Maine are licensed through the State Police, bonded for protection, hold General Liability insurance with Professional Liability coverage as well.

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The requirements this bill sets forth for Professional Investigators are considered basic procedures that are already being done in every interview we conduct. Further, if there are any concerns or issues a victim or witness may have, we already address them during the interview.

I can't speak for every PI in the State, but I can assure you that being the largest company in Maine and the East Coast, our people do not engage in any behavior this bill intends to curb. The mere presence of our expertise is to gather unbiased information, essentially fact finding wherever that may take us. There is no trickery, and every Investigator worth anything knows that by establishing clear communication and rapport with a victim or witness, that is how we get the facts we need, not by deceit. Every time we engage with these parties, they are provided with our credentials, and there is communication of why we are there, and who we are working for.

There is a process in place for PIs who violate the ethics and standards of our profession, and it is all handled through the State Police Licensing Division. You can call it in or submit it online and it is investigated. The State Police interview all parties and there is administrative and punitive action that can be taken. We believe the process in place works sufficiently for our Industry.

Finally, for all of the reasons stated above, we believe this bill should not advance any further.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my position on this Legislation.
Zachary P. Carleton