



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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Sheriff Scott Nichols, President

Sheriff Troy Morton, 1st Vice-President, Sheriff Scott Kane, 2nd Vice-President – Sheriff Barry Curtis, Secretary –
Sheriff Todd Brackett, Treasurer – Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, Immediate Past President –
Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

March 17, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF
SHERIFF TROY MORTON
MAINE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION**

**LD 592 - An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Crime of Endangering the
Welfare of a Child.**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee of Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Sheriff Troy Morton. I have the privilege of serving as Vice-President of the Maine Sheriffs Association and I am here today on their behalf.

Your Maine Sheriffs have taken the position of **supporting** LD 592 - An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Crime of Endangering the Welfare of a Child.

The Maine Sheriffs' Association has embraced areas of criminal justice reform and identifying best practices to assist individuals with mental illness, substance abuse disorders, domestic violence, and other social issues. While supportive we have been concerned some of these changes, may have diminished the voices of victims. There is nothing more important than advocating and protecting the most vulnerable, Maine's children.

The amendments to the current statute are not intended to negatively impact a struggling mother, father, or caregiver of a child, they are intended to hold adults accountable for placing children in extremely dangerous situations. Our deputies have witnessed firsthand, children being exposed to reckless and criminal behavior. Incidents involving gun violence, exposure to fentanyl, and other dangerous drugs are something children should never have to experience. Children have been present during violent drug transactions, left unsupervised as caregivers are unable to care for them, and exposed to unnecessary trauma. We all can agree adverse childhood experiences can have long-lasting impacts on health, well-being, and opportunities throughout a person's life

Law enforcement, prosecutors, and groups such as the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, have worked together to develop resources, training, and statutes that help provide victims with wrap-around services. This amendment is not intended to impact this important work; however, children should not be subjected to reckless acts of criminal behavior.

We ask that you help us protect our state's most vulnerable by voting **OUGHT TO PASS**.

I am happy to answer any questions today or during the work session.