



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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March 24, 2025

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

LD 931 - An Act to Amend the Law Allowing Incarcerated Pretrial or Presentence Individuals to Be Credited Time for Participation in Voluntary Work Projects in a Jail

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 am the Sheriff of Penobscot County and 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 **SUPPORT** for LD 931 - An Act to Amend the Law Allowing Incarcerated Pretrial or Presentence Individuals to Be Credited Time for Participation in Voluntary Work Projects in a Jail

During the 130th legislative session, Maine Sheriffs introduced LD 419, titled "An Act Regarding Participation in Public Works Projects by Pretrial Inmates." The bill garnered unanimous support and was successfully passed into law. Although the intent behind the bill was well-received, specific language regarding earned time was not included in the correct sub-section. This current bill seeks to amend and clarify that language for better implementation.

In Maine, approximately 85% of individuals in county jails are held under pretrial statutes. Offering productive programming to incarcerated individuals is a beneficial approach. A recent media report on a county jail's kitchen program highlighted several key benefits expressed by participants. They noted that engaging in constructive activities contributed positively to their mental health, fostered a sense of normalcy during their incarceration, and equipped them with valuable, usable skills for the future.

In order to facilitate the calculation and application of additional earned time for sentences that may be imposed, it is necessary to amend the language in Title 30-A § 1606 – 1 – B. The proposed amendment would establish a prorated rate whereby one day would be deducted from a sentence for every sixteen hours of participation in a designated project. It's important to note that this earned time would exclusively pertain to county jail sentences.

Your Maine Sheriffs **urge you to support** this amendment. I am happy to answer any questions you may have now or during the work session.