



## Department of the Secretary of State

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*Secretary of State*

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### JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### **L.D. 702, “An Act to Designate January 6th as A Day to Remember and to Preserve the Accounts of Witnesses to the Events of January 6, 2021”**

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State and  
Christian Cotz, Acting Maine State Archivist

Monday, March 24, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government; I am pleased to provide testimony neither for nor against L.D. 702, “An Act to Designate January 6th as A Day to Remember and to Preserve the Accounts of Witnesses to the Events of January 6, 2021”.

The events of January 6, 2021 around and inside the U.S. Capitol were unprecedented and tragic. They were an attack not only upon the Capitol and government officials, but also an attack on the rule of law.

A large and angry crowd entered the U.S. Capitol that day and assaulted the capitol police officers charged with defending it, vandalized and stole property, and ransacked offices. Many of those involved were armed with weapons – some brought to the Capitol, some wrested from police officers, and some repurposed items looted from inside the Capitol itself – and over a few hours they used them to breach barriers and attack those who resisted. The crowd ultimately entered the Capitol as Members of Congress were meeting to certify the Electoral College vote count. A bipartisan U.S. Senate report states that seven individuals, including three law enforcement officers, died as a result of this attack. And according to the former U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, 140 officers guarding the capitol that day reported physical injury – likely an undercount of those who were physically injured or suffered trauma as a result of the day’s events – making it “likely the largest single-day mass assault of law enforcement officers in our nation’s history.”

Documenting this history is an important endeavor that will be vital to future generations.

We aren’t sure, however, that the Maine State Archives is the appropriate entity to compile this history. Rather than creating records, the Maine State Archives preserves and provides access to our state government’s archival records. The duties delineated in L.D. 702 would be beyond the current scope and capabilities of the institution. Of course, the Legislature and Chief Executive could decide to change the scope of the Archives’ work and mission to encompass record

creation and curation – as is possible with all laws – but we would need to add staff to take on these duties.

It should be noted that other institutions are doing this work, albeit with not a specific focus on Mainers and their involvement in that day's events either as elected officials and their staff, as law enforcement, or as rioters and perpetrators of violence. For example, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society is conducting the January 6 Oral History Project, available at [january6history.org/](https://january6history.org/). This project is capturing oral histories of people who were present that day, though not focusing on members of Congress or their staff.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer questions.