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March 24, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF
PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SHERIFF ROBERT YOUNG
MAINE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION**

LD 1032 – AN ACT REGARDING COURT SECURITY

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Joint Standing on Committee on Judiciary. My name is Robert Young, and I am the sheriff of Piscataquis County. I am here today on behalf of the Maine Sheriffs Association.

On March 20, Maine Sheriffs met to discuss and voted to support this bill.

I also speak today as the Sheriff of Piscataquis County, where we experience the disruption of closed courts and lack of security. In the year 2024, the DoverFoxcroft court was closed 23 times due to lack of security. This year to date we are at 5 closures.

The court in Piscataquis is on the 2nd floor of the county building, with county offices taking up the first floor. A Judicial Marshall is normally at the main entrance to check people coming into the building. In addition, on days when a judge is present, there is a Judicial Marshall Bailiff inside the courtroom. This is not criticism of the Marshalls who work our courthouse. But it demonstrates the lack of commitment the State has towards Maine's most rural areas.

The State, by its very nature, is concerned with a larger picture than Piscataquis County. There are 17 superior courts and 27 district courts, Hence, it becomes an easy decision to close this court when Judicial Marshalls are needed elsewhere. The Sheriff of each county is committed to that county and is not content with

closing services to the public. Just like patrol, there isn't a day when the Sheriff can decide to just let things close today.

Also, I think of the lack of respect to the public: the woman seeking a Protection Order, the person filing small claims or trying to pay a fine, all either having to travel further distance to a court or waiting till the next day. It also creates an issue for the rest of the county building, as they are open to the public without needed security.

The former Sheriff, John Goggin, told me he rued his decision to give up court security; he came to believe it was not in the best interest of county residents. Not all counties did so, and today three Sheriffs manage court security and do so well. I believe court security should be returned to the county Sheriffs, who have a much better understanding of local needs, especially in the rural areas, and do not have the luxury of deciding 'Piscataquis doesn't need security today, we'll send the marshal to Bangor' [or any other part of Maine].

I ask you to support this bill, which is a step towards rectifying a troubling pattern.



Sheriff Robert Young

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