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Testimony of Representative Michel Lajoie presenting

LD 102, An Act to Notify the Public of Juveniles Who Are Wanted Persons

before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good morning Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and fellow honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Michel Lajoie, and I represent House District 96, which includes a portion of Lewiston.

I am here before you today to introduce **LD 102, An Act to Notify the Public of Juveniles Who Are Wanted Persons**, proposed by the Department of Corrections (DOC).

This bill allows criminal justice agencies to provide to the public certain juvenile history record information for the purpose of apprehending juveniles when either the juvenile has escaped from custody, as defined by the Maine Criminal Code, or a warrant of arrest has been issued alleging the juvenile has committed a crime that would constitute murder or a Class A, B, C or D crime if they were an adult.

The bill also allows the juvenile history record information to be shared if they are 18 years of age at the time of the alleged escape.

The DOC submitted this bill due to complications that arose last summer when two residents escaped from Long Creek Youth Development Center. Currently, the DOC is prohibited, with a few exceptions, from sharing juvenile criminal history record information under Maine law (15 MRS §3010). In the circumstances faced last summer, that prohibition created public relations and information delivery complications for the DOC.

The DOC believed that at least one of the residents who escaped from Long Creek posed a risk to public safety. While they advised that the public avoid this person and report potential sightings, the confidentiality provisions in statute prevented them from being able to provide a description of the person.

This proposal is narrowly drafted to remove confidentiality protections only for the purpose of apprehending juveniles when either the juvenile has escaped from custody, as defined by the Maine

Criminal Code, or a warrant of arrest has been issued alleging the juvenile has committed a dangerous crime.

The department will testify after me and has more information to share and can better answer your questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.