



STATE OF MAINE
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Maine State Police
Traffic Safety Unit
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04333-0020

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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

AGAINST LD 1156

**An Act to Allow Military Surplus Vehicles to Be Collected and
Used in Patriotic Exhibitions and Parades**

Senator Nangle, Rep. Crafts, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police in Opposition of LD 1156.

This bill, while packaged differently and with a different intent, has the same effect as LD 2, An Act to Allow Military Vehicles Purchased for Civilian Use to Be Registered and Operated on Maine Roads that was heard earlier this session. The Maine State Police and the Department of Public Safety opposed LD2 and similarly we are also opposed to LD 1156.

Demilitarized or military surplus vehicles that **meet** the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, EPA Pollutant requirements and NHTSA DOT crash testing can already be registered and operated on public ways, so our opposition to this bill is directed at those vehicles that

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don't meet the previously mentioned requirements. Our objections were thoroughly expressed in my testimony of LD 2, so I would ask that you consider that testimony in conjunction with this testimony and in return, I will try to keep this brief.

The language in this bill, while intended to describe limited use, would essentially allow the operation of military surplus vehicles anywhere and at any time the owner chooses. The terms like "occasional pleasure driving," "on-road club activities," "educational activities and similar uses," "exhibitions," "tours," "off-road events," and "for transportation to and from these activities and uses, and for maintenance, repair and sale" would essentially negate the sentence, "A military surplus vehicle may not be used for general transportation purposes."

It appears that the sponsor and co-sponsors of this bill are trying to create a similar law that allows for the operation of "antique vehicles" but falls short of creating the same protections to the public. An antique vehicle was built and originally designed for highway use, the military vehicles we object to were built for combat and off-road use only. Antique vehicles were required to meet the FMVSS, EPA pollutant requirements and DOT crash testing at the time of manufacture. There are additional requirements that an antique auto must meet to include they must be at least 35 years of age, be maintained substantially in their original condition, may not be a primary mode of transportation, cannot be altered or reconstructed and the owner must file an affidavit swearing that the vehicle will only be used in exhibitions, club activities, parades or other functions of public interest.

Non-conforming vehicles such as demilitarized or military surplus vehicles that do not meet federal motor vehicle safety standards are a hazard on our roadways. They were designed and built to be used in combat and for other special purposes and they lack basic safety equipment. Most of these vehicles were designed for low speeds therefore their maneuverability is greatly reduced as the speed increases and so does the danger. They also have a higher center of gravity which increases the chances of a rollover. The Government Accountability Office released data that shows you are 10 times more likely to die in a crash in a military vehicle than in any other passenger

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type of vehicle. When these military vehicles are involved in collisions with civilian vehicles the results can be catastrophic for all, especially the occupants of the other vehicle as those vehicles were not designed to absorb the impact of roadside bombs like military vehicles. These military vehicles that meet the definition of an "Off-road vehicle" in Title 29-A section 101-47 are prohibited Under Title 29-A section 354 to be registered and banned from operating on a public way under Title 29-A section 2092.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1156.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.

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