



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Maine State Police
Traffic Safety Unit
State House Station 20
Augusta, Maine
04333-0020

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK
COMMISSIONER

COL. WILLIAM ROSS
CHIEF

LT. COL. BRIAN P. SCOTT
DEPUTY CHIEF

Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

IN OPPOSITION TO LD 320

An Act to Repeal Certain Motor Vehicle Inspection Requirements

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 320.

This bill would remove the current requirement for annual inspections of motor vehicles in Maine except for commercial vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers, school buses and fire trucks. In Maine there are approximately 40,000 reportable vehicle crashes a year and roughly 3% of those are defect related. Approx. 1,200 crashes each year had some defect related nexus to the crash. The national defect related crash rate is closer 12% or 4 times higher. We believe our rates are substantially lower due to the inspection requirements. A risk vs. reward analysis would suggest the risk is much too high to justify the potential savings of \$12.50 a year for most vehicles.

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

Offices located at: 36 Hospital Street, Augusta Maine
(207) 624-8939 (Voice) (888) 524-7900 (TDD) (207) 624-8945 (Fax)

Last year there were 178 motor vehicle fatalities in Maine, the highest in over a decade. This begs the question, is this the time to remove the annual inspection program and risk more lives? We believe now is the time to adopt and embrace a “Safe System Approach” to increase roadway safety, that focuses on safer roads, safer speeds, safer vehicles, safer driving behaviors and better post-crash care. All of these elements used in concert are critical to saving lives.

The Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection Program is effective at catching defects during a vehicle’s annual inspection and thereby compels vehicle owners to fix and maintain their vehicles. Without these checks and balances some vehicle owners may never bring their vehicle to a garage to be looked at by a mechanic and may not be aware of serious safety issues until a critical component fails. A critical component failure can lead to tragedy, one that may have been prevented with an annual inspection.

Periodic motor vehicle inspections are critical and supported by numerous studies. To summarize the studies and anecdote from which we draw these conclusions, please see below;

- 2008 Missouri State Highway Patrol concluded that the national average of vehicles involved in fatal crashes with defects that don’t have an inspection program are **1 in 77.6** as opposed to their state that does annual inspections at **1 in 120.9**
- 2009 Pennsylvania’s Vehicle Safety study conducted by Cambridge Systematics Inc. reported that their program saves between 127 and 187 lives per year and saves the tax-payers approx. 100 million dollars.
- 2017 University of Texas at Austin Center for Transportation Research on Texas’ inspection program reported that vehicles with defects are twice as likely to result in fatal crashes.
- 2020 Carnegie Mellon University study indicated (This study includes all 50 states over a 44-year period):
 - Panel data model results provide strong evidence that jurisdictions experience lower motorway fatality rates due to the presence of an active safety

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

I/M(Inspection/Maintenance) program for passenger vehicles.

- States with I/M programs were found to have 2.8% fewer fatalities, per 100,000 vehicles registered, over the period of analysis.
 - In 2018 this represents approximately 1,000 fewer road fatalities in the United States. (This would be exponentially larger if more states had an inspection program).
 - The data used for this study was obtained from FARS (Fatality Analysis Reporting System) the largest publicly available road fatality database in the US. The US Department of Transportation collects the same data sets throughout the country by trained staff to ensure accuracy and consistency.
-
- AAMVA (American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators) promotes periodic inspections and indicates that inspection programs can prevent vehicles failures on the highways and crashes that may result in injury or death.
 - NHTSA opines that; “Each state should have a program for periodic inspections of all registered vehicles to reduce the number of vehicles with existing or potential conditions that may contribute to crashes or increase the severity of crashes that do occur and should require the owner to correct such conditions.”
 - The Maine State Police polled one of its largest inspection chains and they compiled data for three months and concluded that approximately 25% of all vehicles fail inspection. Maine State Police school bus inspection data reveals approximately 30% of all school buses have an out of service, safety related failure rate. The most common failures are for brakes, lights, exhausts, tires and suspension components.
 - The state of Vermont has had an electronic inspection program since 2017 and report similar findings as the MSP. They show a 12.5% failure rate but acknowledge that most stations are

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

Offices located at: 36 Hospital Street, Augusta Maine
(207) 624-8939 (Voice) (888) 524-7900 (TDD) (207) 624-7088 (Fax)

performing pre-inspections and making the necessary repairs before they are actually submitted for inspections. Their number one failure item is brakes.

A cost/benefit analysis was performed by the motor vehicle inspection working group in 2021 and it was determined the cost of the program is low and only creates a minimal inconvenience for the value of the service provided. It is believed based upon the Carnegie Mellon study that approximately 52 lives are spared each year as a result of the Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection Program. That means one life has been saved each week of every year, for decades. With that being said, the benefit of saving 52 lives a year far exceeds all costs associated with the current inspection program. While fatal crashes are of primary importance, the same reduction in all types of crashes can be expected as well. Meaning without the Maine Inspection Program the number of property damage crashes and personal injury crashes would increase proportionally equating to approximately 14,000 more crashes a year.

While I don't know who coined the original phrase "doing the right thing is not always easy and the doing the easy thing is not always right," it seems very applicable when deliberating over this and other bills that seeks to weaken or repeal the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program in the State of Maine. In addition to saving lives, reducing personal injuries and property damage crashes, the inspection program provides consumer protection on the sales of used cars. Without the inspection program, what safety standards will a used car need to meet? Who will ensure that the standard is followed? What happens to the 30-day warranty of inspect-ability provided by law on used vehicle sales?

Another question this committee should consider is who will ensure that the statutory required equipment standards are met if the inspection program was eliminated? All states have equipment standards for motor vehicles, so you are only considering the methodology of enforcement. Does this committee want licensed inspectors looking over your vehicles in a safe and controlled environment at the time of your choosing or do you prefer that law enforcement officers conduct roadside inspections at a time they find

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

convenient? I would add that most police officers are not mechanics and very few are licensed inspectors. Forcing police officers to take on this responsibility will only exacerbate the current issue plaguing most agencies with their very limited resources and competing responsibilities. It would also increase the number of unpleasant contacts between law enforcement and the public, as most of you would prefer to go about your day and not be detained while officers, who may not even know what they are looking at, conduct safety inspections on your vehicle. It's worth repeating, **all states have equipment standards**. The testimony you have heard regarding how most states have done away with annual inspections should include a statement of fact, that they still all require vehicles to meet minimum safety standards and have pushed the responsibilities onto police officers to enforce.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LD 320.

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.

INTEGRITY * FAIRNESS * COMPASSION * EXCELLENCE

Offices located at: 36 Hospital Street, Augusta Maine
(207) 624-8939 (Voice) (888) 524-7900 (TDD) (207) 624-7088 (Fax)