



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

Sheriff Scott Nichols, President

Sheriff Troy Morton, 1st Vice-President, Sheriff Scott Kane, 2nd Vice-President – Sheriff Barry Curtis, Secretary – Sheriff Todd Brackett, Treasurer – Sheriff Dale P. Lancaster, Immediate Past President – Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

April 25, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF
SHERIFF KEN MASON
MAINE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION**

**LD 1683 – An Act To Make A Freedom of Access Act Request
Free Of Charge Upon Petition**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Joint Standing on Judiciary. My name is Ken Mason and I'm the Sheriff of Kennebec County. I chair the Maine Sheriffs Association Legislative Policy Committee and I'm here on their behalf.

Your Maine Sheriffs have taken the unanimous position of **OPPOSE** for LD 1683 – An Act Make A Freedom of Access Act Request Free Of Charge Upon Petition.

Maine sheriffs support transparency, and work diligently to ensure our constituents have access to the information they request. Our concern is not about the intent of this bill, but rather how to meet the new requirements as proposed in this bill.

Our first concern pertains to the signature requirement. The time and process of ensuring that one hundred and fifty signatures are registered voters would be incredibly cumbersome for our staff members. There is widespread knowledge that Maine law enforcement agencies are chronically understaffed. Adding this step when processing requests for information would strain our already overworked staff members.

Sheriffs work hard to ensure that we're meeting the needs of the same constituents all of you serve around this horseshoe. Providing quick responses to requests for information is one of several best practices that sheriffs strive to adhere to. Removing fees for burdensome requests and incorporating reporting mandates may seem innocuous, however, these additional requirements would unintentionally create more work for our staff.

Maine sheriffs appreciate the intent behind LD 1656, but we urge members of this committee to vote **OUGHT NOT TO PASS**.

We appreciate the opportunity to present our concerns. I am happy to answer any questions you may have now or during the work session.