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*Testimony of Rep. Dan Ankeles presenting*

## **LD 1600, An Act to Provide Regional Support Funding for Municipal Police Departments to Support Special Response Teams**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony with you. I am Dan Ankeles, and I represent House District 100, which is a central portion of Brunswick. It's my pleasure to present **LD 1600, An Act to Provide Regional Support Funding for Municipal Police Departments to Support Special Response Teams**.

This legislation is about ensuring a fair distribution of the costs to operate Maine's Special Response Teams, or SRTs. Maine's law enforcement community has seven of these elite tactical units. They are specially certified by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy so that they can be deployed into some of the most dangerous situations that a police officer can face.

The SRTs are Bangor, Portland, Brunswick, Cumberland County Emergency Services, Southern Maine Special Response Team of York County (based out of Sanford), Southern Maine Regional SWAT (based out of South Portland, Scarborough and Cape Elizabeth) and a Maine State Police SRT that is not part of this legislation.

These six municipally-based teams are funded exclusively by the communities where they are located, which seems reasonable at first since SRTs are composed of members of municipal police departments.

But in reality, these teams are deployed across the entire state and do the kind of work that goes well beyond what is traditionally thought of as a mutual aid call. These are high-risk operations that exceed the capabilities of standard law enforcement agencies and require specialized training, equipment and tactics.

So, with that context in mind, LD 1600 creates the Special Response Team Fund to reimburse municipalities that maintain and operate SRTs. It requires each county to contribute annually a pro rata share based upon population of an amount equal to refund 10% of the previous calendar year's expenses that each municipality spent to maintain and operate a special response team.

Those testifying after me can help translate that part of the summary and provide harder numbers on costs, but the idea is to take a fairly modest amount of funding and spread the cost to the point where no one community experiences significant fiscal pain. This approach provides a far more stable foundation for SRT funding, and every will Mainers continue to receive the benefit of some of the best law enforcement officers in state being ready to deploy anywhere and everywhere to protect us from harm.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill and begin this conversation with the committee. If you feel that this legislation is reasonable and has potential, I am happy to work with all of you and with stakeholders between now and the work session. I will try to answer questions but I will also note there are others in the room prepared to testify in more detail.