

I



Sophie Warren
P.O. Box 1
Scarborough, ME 04070
Phone: (207) 450-0765
Sophie.Warren@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
2 STATE HOUSE STATION AUGUSTA,
MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

May 12, 2025, 1:00 PM

Testimony of Representative Sophie Warren Presenting
**L.D. 1784, An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make
Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon, Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Hasenfus and respected colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. Thank you for the opportunity to present L.D. 1784, An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers.

This bill is a commonsense step toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and public trust in Maine's law enforcement agencies. It ensures that all police departments, state, county, and municipal, make their operational policies and procedures publicly accessible on their websites and in printed form. When policies are updated, the bill requires that revisions be published within 60 days, with the publishing date clearly indicated.

The importance of this measure was brought to my attention by a public defense attorney who highlighted how time-consuming and inefficient it can be to access departmental policies. Requests can involve multiple follow-ups and unclear processes. L.D. 1784 aims to streamline this, ensuring that everyone, from legal professionals to members of the public, has easy and timely access to the information they need. It's a practical solution that aligns with how we expect government to operate: clearly, openly, and efficiently.

The public has a right to know the standards and procedures that govern how law enforcement officers operate in their communities. Greater access to these policies allows for informed public dialogue, supports consistent application of law enforcement practices, and reinforces the idea that policing is a public service carried out in the public's name.

The bill also supports and reinforces ongoing training efforts within law enforcement. It does not create a new training mandate, but instead builds upon the practices that already exist to keep officers informed and accountable. The requirement for agency leaders to certify annually to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy is intended to help ensure consistency across departments and uphold standards that are already part of the profession's expectations and in line with all other aspects of policy and procedure already requiring annual certification from the chief administrative officer of each law enforcement agency to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees, affirming that the agency is in compliance.

Importantly, the bill, through the sponsor's amendment, clarifies that none of these transparency requirements will compromise public safety or investigative integrity. Confidential intelligence and investigative record information protected under the Intelligence and Investigative Record Information Act will remain confidential, ensuring that sensitive law enforcement operations are not exposed. Additionally, it will ensure compensation for any paper copies are paid for by the requestor pursuant to current Freedom of Access Act regulations.

In sum, L.D. 1784 strikes an appropriate balance between transparency and operational integrity. It builds public confidence in policing, ensures officers are well-informed and well-trained, and reinforces the principle that law enforcement should operate with openness and accountability to the communities they serve.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass with the addition of the sponsor amendment on L.D. 1784. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.