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Senator Baldacci and Representative Salisbury and esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today. I am providing testimony in opposition of LD's 1556 and 1884.

I am Ken Mason, the Sheriff of Kennebec County.

Every elected official in Kennebec County, except myself, is affiliated with a political party.

When I began working for a county government in Lincoln County in 2005, it was refreshing to see that politics did not influence the work of their county officials. This non-partisan style representation continued when I came to Kennebec.

As elected officials, our responsibility is to make decisions based on what we believe is best for our constituents, rather than what benefits a particular party.

This is why I continue to be an Independent Sheriff and the only elected Independent in Kennebec County.

Having served as Sheriff in Kennebec for over eight years now, I have witnessed cooperation among the three commissioners. While they may have different opinions on various issues, they always reach a resolution that satisfies all three or is at least acceptable enough for them to cast their votes. This system is working.

Passing either of these legislative documents will create an unfunded fiscal note which will just be another burden on the hardworking taxpayers.

This will include additional stipends, benefits, and possibly more administrative staff. The existing commissioners' room and office which is built for the 3 will require major work to accommodate additional people. A cost that may not seem like a burden to some, but this would create a very costly change that we in Kennebec with all our other mandates cannot bear.

Please support our county and the citizens by not fixing something that isn't broken.