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THE MAINE LEGISLATURE

*Testimony of Senator Nicole Grohoski and Representative Nina Milliken in support of
LD 2033, Resolve, to Designate Route 3 in Trenton as the
Deputy Luke Gross Memorial Highway*

Before the Committee on Transportation

January 8, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. We are Senator Nicole Grohoski, representing Senate District 7, and Representative Nina Milliken, representing House District 16. Together, we represent the town of Trenton, where Deputy Luke Gross lost his life on September 23, 2021. We are pleased to present testimony in support of LD 2033, “Resolve, to Designate Route 3 in Trenton as the Deputy Luke Gross Memorial Highway.”

On that September morning nearly four and a half years ago, Deputy Luke Gross was doing what comprises so much of an officer's job—sorting out someone else's mess. He was clearing debris from an accident scene on Route 3, his cruiser's emergency lights activated, wearing a reflective safety vest. He bent down to pick something up from the road. He was struck from behind and died of his injuries.

The loss shook our entire region. Deputy Gross was 44 years old, a Bucksport native, a proud father to Ryan and Alissa, and devoted husband to Lauren. But here in Hancock County, we knew him as so much more. He was the deputy who brought smiles to kids' faces at Christmas through Sheriff's Office fundraisers. He was the DARE officer in our schools and a counselor at Camp POSTCARD (Police Officers Striving to Create and Reinforce Dreams). He was the friend who drove a colleague battling cancer to Boston for treatments, repeatedly, and without hesitation. He was the school board chairman at Hancock Grammar School who helped develop the backpack program to feed children living with food insecurity.

As one colleague put it, Deputy Luke Gross was a big kid at heart who always tried to find the good in anything. He treated people warmly, with respect and a smile. He cared deeply about our community.

Route 3 in Trenton is where Deputy Gross made the ultimate sacrifice while protecting public safety. Every day, thousands of residents and visitors travel that stretch of road on their way to

and from Mount Desert Island. Designating it in his memory would ensure that Luke's service, his compassion, and his dedication to others are not forgotten. It would remind all of us driving that route to slow down, move over, and watch out for the first responders who put themselves at risk to keep us safe.

The Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce posthumously named Luke their Citizen of the Year in 2022. Sheriff Scott Kane retired his call sign, Han9, ensuring no other deputy would ever be assigned that number. These were fitting tributes. This memorial highway designation would be another – one that honors him in the very place where he fell, and one that carries forward his legacy every single day.

We would like to conclude by noting that our absence as cosponsors should in no way be interpreted as anything other than an oversight by the bill sponsor. Had we been approached to cosponsor this bill, we would have been honored to do so. Trenton is our community, and Deputy Luke Gross served our neighbors in Trenton and around Hancock County with distinction for 18 years. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to make our support of this bill absolutely clear. We hope you will join us in doing so. Thank you.