



Janet T. Mills
Governor

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY
15 Oak Grove Road
Vassalboro, Maine 04989



1980
Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner

Lincoln E. Ryder
Director

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

My name is Josh Daley, the Assistant Director of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA) and I am here today on behalf of the MCJA neither for nor against L.D. 1980 an Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers.

This bill seeks to continue to examine the potential causal factors for decreased recruitment, retention and overall wellness in law enforcement through an advisory council, as well as mandate officer wellness training in the basic law enforcement training program. The MCJA values align with the intent of this bill and apply to many areas of focus for basic law enforcement training. The Maine Criminal Justice Academy recognizes the difficulties that exist in recruitment and retention for Maine law enforcement agencies across the state and appreciates the importance of officer wellness given the nature of law enforcement work, as well as the increased risk of destructive behavioral patterns and self-harm to those in the profession due to cumulative stress.

The MCJA has continued to work with stakeholders to identify individual issues being experienced as it pertains to staffing given the estimation of vacancies and has dedicated a great deal of time and effort to assist with the stagnation of recruitment. Some efforts have been placed on hosting recruitment opportunities at the MCJA, while other efforts center around increasing time frames between basic law enforcement training programs to allow for lengthier hiring periods and flexibility with agencies to ensure vacancies are filled as quickly as possible.

It is also important to note that the current training curriculum includes several topics, varying in length, that are centered on officer wellness. Those topics in the current basic training program include, but are not limited to; two (2) hours of Stress Management, four (4) hours of Police Response to Critical Stress, twelve (12) hours of Mental Health related training, and a minimum of fifty-seven (57) hours of Lifetime Fitness, which includes nutrition, physical fitness and additional correlations to overall health and wellness. Officer Wellness was also a mandatory training topic for law enforcement in (2025).

Additionally, MCJA staff and other subject matter experts (SMEs) from around the state will be meeting on Tuesday, January 13th to assess the quantitative data collected during our ongoing strategic plans job task analysis (JTA), which will directly impact the basic law enforcement training program curriculum and will be based on a needs assessment from our stakeholders and front line officers, as well as supervisors.



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Although this bill does address the need for additional staffing and provides language regarding a Wellness Coordinator position, it may not fully account for the imposition of additional curriculum in the basic training program when increased capacity and time restraints currently challenge training efficacy. At this time, there are six (6) full-time training coordinators employed by the MCJA, all of which have been inundated with program responsibilities. It is vital that additional staffing and funding exist to truly execute the intentions of the bill as proposed.

For reasons articulated above, I, on behalf of the MCJA am neither for nor against the bill as proposed. Regardless of outcome, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), Board of Trustees and the MCJA are committed to working with this dedicated stakeholder group and all our partners to find resources to assist with recruitment and retention and are fully invested in the overall wellness of our Maine law enforcement.

I wish to thank this committee for your time and support and will try to answer any questions you may have.