



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

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Sheriff Scott Nichols, President

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Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

Testimony – LD 1980

January 12, 2026

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Ryan Close and I am a Sergeant with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. I am honored to come before you today in a few different capacities;

First, I am a seventeen year plus veteran of Law Enforcement here in Maine, a graduate of the 15th Basic Law Enforcement Training Program and currently hold an Advance Law Enforcement Certification from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

Secondly, I was selected by the Maine Sheriff's Association to represent them on the Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers" in 2024. I served in that capacity and assisted in the research and analysis resulting in the report of the same title and date January 2, 2025. That report issued roughly thirteen recommendations that were presented to the legislature that have been presented in the current LD 1980.

Third, I have done extensive work in and around Peer Support for First Responders in the State of Maine. Primarily, I work with Law Enforcement Officer's in crisis and work on getting them treatment. I field many requests for assistance monthly and sometimes weekly. I also speak locally, regionally, and nationally on issues of Law Enforcement Peer Support, Law Enforcement Suicide, and normalizing Mental Health in Law Enforcement.

It is from these backgrounds and experience that I am proud to speak in **support** of LD 1980 "an Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers".

I applaud the work done by the Stakeholder Group and the leadership demonstrated by the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety to move these recommendations forward to bring forth positive change to some of the daunting statistics that haunt our profession. The opportunity to analyze data, not from around the country, rather from right here in Maine allows us to understand what is happening in our State. How these pieces of data are affecting the lives of our Maine Law Enforcement Officers, their families, their agencies, and their communities through understaffing, attrition, mental health challenges and suicide.

I do realize that this bill will likely move into a work session in order to address any concerns or issues that have arisen since the Stakeholders Report published the recommendations. I highly encourage any work done to use the data collected from the Stakeholder Report. I would make myself available if requested to assist or attend any work sessions related to this bill or this work in general.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to be before you today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Close".

Ryan Close
Franklin County Sheriff's Office