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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Jill C. Duson in support of
LD 2107, An Act to Establish the Maine Nonprofit Security Grant Program
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jill Duson. I represent State Senate District 27, which includes part of Portland and part of Westbrook. I am honored to serve as the Senate Assistant Majority Leader.

I am here today to speak in support of LD 2107, An Act to Establish the Maine Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

Last fall, I heard from constituents about threats of violence targeting groups in the community based on religion, and threats targeting organizations that serve at risk populations. Our state and nation have sadly seen a rise in violence against individuals and groups based on their faith, cultural identity and/or national origin.

In response, I helped to convene a conversation with local leaders, city officials and members of the Department of Public Safety to discuss these concerns and identify steps we might take to address these threats. I am happy to cosponsor this bill brought forth by Representative Brennan which aims to provide support and resources to keep people – from all walks of life – safe from acts of violence.

As shared by the sponsor, Maine would join other states who have established a program like LD 2107 that works to address the reality-based fears and concerns of folks in communities like yours and mine. States across the country, both red and blue, have taken steps to harden targets and make other security enhancements to prevent harm from occurring. Our districts, rural and urban, should not have to worry about violence on their way to and from their house of worship, a local gathering spot or to visit community service organizations.

I understand from the sponsor that there are two changes that will be offered for consideration by the committee. I support both changes and look forward to the conversation ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments in support of this initiative. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.