



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan presenting

LD 2107, An Act to Establish the Maine Nonprofit Security Grant Program

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Michael Brennan, and I represent House District 115, which is part of Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to present **LD 2107, An Act to Establish the Maine Nonprofit Security Grant Program**.

In recent years, our country has seen far too many violent attacks against community gatherings – hate crimes against groups of innocent people based on their faith traditions, who they love, where they were born or the color of their skin. Even so, few non-profit organizations have the resources to pay for necessary protective measures. This bill is about making sure non-profits have the tools to keep people safe and secure from acts of terrorism and extremism.

A number of states have established grant programs to help non-profit organizations implement security measures, including reinforced doors, access control systems, security personnel and more. Maine should act now to join those states by passing LD 2107.

You will hear from community leaders today about the risks they are facing and how this measure will help protect the people they serve. Before I turn it over to them, I would like to offer two modest amendments to the bill for the committee's consideration.

First, I suggest the grant program should be administered by the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) instead of the Attorney General's Office as specified in the original bill. In previous years, MEMA has administered a similar grant program funded by the federal government, but the future of that federal program is in doubt. Because MEMA has been doing this work, I believe it is in the best position to continue it without interruption.

Second, I suggest reducing the appropriation from \$2 million to \$1.5 million. I believe this level of funding is appropriate when compared to the funding that other, larger states have dedicated to similar programs.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me.