



# Maine Sheriffs' Association

*"One Team, One Mission"*

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February 24, 2021

## **L.D. 417 – An Act To Protect Maine's Drivers From Pretextual Traffic Stops**

Senator Dechambault, Representative Warren, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Robert Young. I am the Sheriff of Piscataquis County and here today on behalf of the Maine Sheriffs' Association. Maine sheriffs met to discuss this bill and our unanimous position is to oppose L.D. 417.

The Maine Sheriffs' Association legislative policy committee reviewed this bill. While recognizing the motivation of this committee is to ensure the safety, well-being, and fair treatment of all Maine citizens is your collective priority, this bill has the potential to cause significant harm to the people Maine Sheriffs are committed to protect.

In essence, this bill would prevent a police officer or deputy sheriff from investigating many serious crimes, unless clear evidence was present unrelated to a traffic stop. Examples of crimes this bill is mandating law enforcement ignore would include human trafficking, drivers operating under the influence, domestic abuse, theft, and countless others that jeopardize public safety. Passage of this bill would serve only to have law enforcement look the other way when faced with these crucial and life-threatening circumstances.

In June of 2020, the Maine Sheriffs Association stood with the Maine Chiefs of Police, the Maine Department of Public Safety, and the Maine Prosecutors Association to deliver a joint statement that included, "As community leaders, we are all accountable for the actions of our police officers. We must continue to build trust and follow best practices. We recognize that change starts with us. We embrace and honor this responsibility." We stand by this statement and look to collaborate with this committee and its members to achieve those best practices. L.D. 417 is not the answer. We strongly urge this committee to unanimously vote ought not to pass.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,  
Sheriff Robert Young  
o/b/o Maine Sheriffs' Association

Mary-Anne LaMarre  
Belgrade

Sheriff Robert Young will be providing testimony on this bill in opposition. He already has zoom link for participation. Thank you.