



# Maine Sheriffs' Association

*"One Team, One Mission"*

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March 24, 2021

## **L.D. 661 – An Act To Ensure Equity in Petitions for Rulemaking under the Maine Administrative Procedure Act**

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

My name is Jeff Trafton. I am the Sheriff of Waldo County and I am 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. 661.

The Maine Sheriffs' Association legislative policy committee reviewed this bill. While recognizing the motivation of the sponsor of this bill is to establish equity among incarcerated individuals, L.D. 661 would implement a one-size-fits-all solution that would assuredly result in unintended consequences.

As written, three women housed in Knox County jail could make sweeping and costly changes to amend or modify the rules in Knox County, as their average female population hovers around ten. While it may seem far-fetched, would a petition for taco Tuesday be put into the process for proceedings? If Piscataquis County had just two inmates of their five women decide to petition their jail for costly changes, this bill would mandate the demands be considered. In Franklin County, just one inmate of the two women, or four men, could put forth a petition, demanding time and attention of our staff.

Maine's fifteen jails have consistently delivered exemplary ratings for the services we provide to those who find themselves within our communities, earning significant ratings from our MDOC inspections. We strive to offer ethical and humane conditions that are respectful of our inmates. We collectively seek ways to reduce recidivism and provide inmates with tools to help them succeed upon release. Maine sheriffs, like the sponsor of this bill, expect to establish equity among our inmates. Forcing counties to implement this wide-sweeping mandate, essentially adding to the already short-staffed and underpaid corrections' staffs, can only further our challenges with finding qualified staff to operate our facilities.

As many distinguished members around the virtual horseshoe know, Maine sheriffs are closely aligned with this committee and we value those relationships. We strongly urge this committee to recognize the potential damage of L.D. 661 and unanimously vote ought not to pass.

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

Sincerely,  
Sheriff Jeff Trafton  
o/b/o Maine Sheriffs' Association