



# Maine Sheriffs' Association

*"One Team, One Mission"*

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March 24, 2021

## **L.D. 521 – An Act To Modify the Rule-making Process for Establishing County and Municipal Jail Standards.**

Senator Dechambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished 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 position is to support L.D. 251.

I would like to begin by recognizing the positive communication and collaboration that is ongoing between the Maine Sheriffs and the Maine Department of Corrections. Commissioner Liberty and Deputy Director, Dr. Ryan Thornell have encouraged a team effort approach to battling Covid-19 in our county facilities. We've been included in daily communications throughout the pandemic and the ongoing support has been significant.

L.D. 521 did not originate from the sheriffs, but we understand and wish to speak to events that were instrumental in the creation of this bill. Title 34-A, § 1208 mandates that the commissioner shall create and maintain a county and municipal detention facility advisory committee. As identified members of this committee, Maine's sheriffs have actively contributed to the dialogue and strategizing efforts of the group. The commissioner is further mandated to consult the committee when promulgating standards. MDOC and the commissioner have faithfully adhered to this mandate.

Maine statute then becomes less than concise. The recent passage of rule-making by the MDOC initiated the potential for increased costs to some or all county facilities. Other rule-making established changes that we believe were not evidence-based best practices. We believe the motivation of L.D. 521 is to remove the ambiguity currently in statute and provide specific guidelines that best meet the needs of all stakeholders in Maine's correctional facilities.

Maine's sheriffs ask that you support L.D. 521 by voting ought 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