

Tracy Collins
Maine Information and Analysis Center Advisory Board

My name is Tracy Collins. I am a civil litigator in private practice based in Bangor, and I serve as the Chairperson of the Maine Information and Analysis Center Advisory Board. The following is a statement prepared by members of the Board in support of LD 12, which I deliver on its behalf.

The MIAC serves a critical role in our state as a central clearinghouse for information and as a conduit for effective and efficient communication between federal and local agencies. The purpose of the MIAC's Advisory Board is to provide oversight of the MIAC's activities — including its collection and handling of information — and to ensure those activities comply with established guidelines regarding privacy and civil liberties. Our 12-member board includes representatives from state and federal law enforcement agencies as well as private citizens who contribute an important independent and objective perspective to board discussions.

We have been tasked with thoroughly reviewing the latest activities and general policies and procedures employed by the MIAC, and it is our responsibility to advise the MIAC to review, revise, or terminate policies and procedures that are in conflict with protection of privacy and civil liberties. We have been consistently impressed with the level of discussion that takes place, with the careful attention that MIAC pays to the appropriateness of its processes, and with the respect and deference that the MIAC representatives give to our recommendations and analysis. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite our fellow community members to join us and take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about how the MIAC works to improve our public safety systems throughout the State while safeguarding our constitutional civil liberties.

Over the past several months, we have made several recommendations to the MIAC to improve its processes, and those recommendations have been swiftly implemented. For example, last year, we recommended and the MIAC has adopted a procedure to include two board members as participants in its semi-annual audit process. During our latest audit, which spanned over several days, the MIAC implemented this change, and two board members — myself and civilian Michael Feldman — joined the audit and engaged in an in-depth review of the MIAC's operations, ensuring those operations were compliant with our privacy guidelines, and providing insight and recommendations for improving both MIAC's operations and the audit process itself, which recommendations the MIAC also has swiftly implemented.

It is the Advisory Board's strongly held belief that LD 12 is an appropriate and prudent measure to further our shared goals of ensuring transparency and accountability.