



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Lois Galgay Reckitt introducing*

## **LD 513, An Act Regarding the Membership of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and Its Complaint Review Committee**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety*

Good morning, Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and fellow members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Lois Galgay Reckitt, and I represent House District 31, which is part of South Portland. I am here before you this morning to introduce **LD 513, An Act Regarding the Membership of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and Its Complaint Review Committee**.

Before I begin my brief presentation on the substance of my proposed bill, I want to tell you why I submitted such a bill. What could I possibly know about the Maine Criminal Justice Academy? Were I one of you at this moment, I might wonder the same thing.

I spent 37 years of my life as the Executive Director of Family Crisis Services (FCS). Our agency was one of the first comprehensive domestic violence services programs in Maine – beginning in 1978. FCS from its earliest days had a strong working relationship with many of the police agencies in our jurisdiction. One of those departments from our earliest beginnings was the Portland Police Department – where FCS for decades now has had an Outreach Office housed within the department.

Partly as a result of those efforts and my own decades of work on issues impacting the Criminal Justice System, I was invited to join the Board of Directors of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. I subsequently served in that role for 15 years. I believe I was the second female civilian to serve on that body. I do know that Linda Smithers, of Strong, was the very first. During that time, I watched the Academy grow in competence – and begin its moves toward modernization and away from militancy. I applaud those efforts, and I trust they are continuing. However, part of those efforts, especially in today's era of public scrutiny, must be increased citizen oversight.

That belief was the impetus for this bill – that and the belief held by both myself and the Academy Director – that there is way too much work to handle on that crucial committee with current membership numbers. From that observation comes part one of my bill. The critical part.

Having seen the various proposals that followed my own initiative, I also now believe that any consideration of part two should be done in the context and together with the various other proposals being suggested today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.