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

April 16, 2021

Chair Deschambault, Chair Warren, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as chair of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as board president of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in **support** of LD 513.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta and currently represents 15 of Maine's 16 counties and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

Discussion. We would first like to thank Representative Reckitt for bringing this legislation forward. This bill would expand the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA) from 18 to 19 members by adding a county commissioner as a member of the Board. The MCJA Board currently includes a municipal official, partly in recognition of the fact that municipalities employ local police officers trained by MCJA. County commissioners occupy a position similar to municipal officials in that counties, through the county sheriff, hire law enforcement officers trained by MCJA. Having a county commissioner serve on the MCJA Board would bring to the Board the important perspective of county policymaking and governance, similar to the municipal governance perspective brought by the municipal official on the Board. Recognizing the similarities between municipal and county officials, the bill uses the same language for the county commissioner representative as is currently in place for the municipal official.

Lastly, adding a county commissioner to the Board will bring the membership on the Board to an odd number, which is helpful for resolving tie votes. The Board currently has 18 members, which increases the chance of deadlock.

With regard to the section of this bill regarding the complaint review committee, the Maine County Commissioners Association does not have a position. Our support for the bill is focused on the section regarding the addition of a county commissioner to the MCJA Board of Trustees.

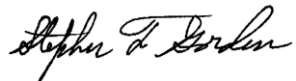
Comments of MCCA re LD 513

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Conclusion. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen T. Gorden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephen Gorden
President

cc: Commissioner Brian Hobart, Chair, MCCA Legislative Committee
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel