

TESTIMONY OF DIRECTOR RICHARD R. DESJARDINS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
MAINE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACADEMY

(In Support) L.D. 1043

"An Act Concerning the Unannounced Execution of Search Warrants"

Sponsored by: Rep. McCrea

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Hearing Date: April 26, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 436, State House

Rep. McCrea, Sen Deschambault, Rep. Warren and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Richard R. Desjardins and I am the Director of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, representing the Maine Department of Public Safety.

I am here today to testify in support of LD 1043, "An Act Concerning the Unannounced Execution of Search Warrants". This bill requires law enforcement agencies to adopt written policies regarding the unannounced execution of search warrants. Such policies must meet the minimum standards adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

The Maine Criminal Justice Academy's Board of Trustees has been in existence since the early 1970's and has the statutory authority to established minimum standards for law enforcement agencies and sets certification standards for law enforcement and corrections officers. Currently, the MCJA Board has the following representatives: the DPS Commissioner, the DOC Commissioner, the Attorney General, the State Police Colonel and the Maine Warden Colonel, who are all ex-officio members. We have 13 members who serve a 2 or 3-year term and are appointed by the Governor. They are, a Maine Sheriff, a Maine Police Chief, a Federal Law Enforcement Officer, a District Attorney, a Non-supervisory Corrections Officer, a member of Wabanaki tribal governments and two (2) Police Officers. We also have three (3) Citizen Board members, an Educator, a Municipal Official, none of whom could have ever been a sworn law enforcement officer.

The Academy's Board is committed to commencing rule making activities and we believe that this Board is well suited to establish standards and requirements for the use of unannounced search warrants that balance to needs of law enforcement and those of the public. The rule making process will allow the Board's Policy and Standards Committee to review best practices for unannounced search warrants, allow for public comment and present recommendations to the full Board during a public meeting. This process will help provide a level of transparency and provide clear guidance for law enforcement agencies throughout Maine.

In closing, the members of the Board of Trustees are tireless advocates, working very well together on the important topics that face the law enforcement and correction's profession. This Board's recent moves to strengthen the standards and training of law enforcement continues to be far

ahead of other states and reflects the interest of our Board to be responsive to the concerns around law enforcement accountability and standards.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, either now or at any future work session.