

Cheria Clow Rollins, LCSW

47 Tilton Avenue

Kittery, ME 03904

January 9, 2022

RE: Support for LD #1447-An Act To Require Training in Racial Issues, Racial Justice and Social Issues at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and To Establish Additional Requirements for Law Enforcement Officers and Candidates

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am writing to support the legislation adding requirements for our police officers to have much needed training in areas related to racial bias, racial justice and social issues such as substance use/misuse, mental health issues and developmental disabilities.

I have been working as a mental health professional in Maine for twenty years and it is imperative that our police officers have this training as they are often the first to respond on the scene dealing with crisis intervention that requires knowledge, skills as well as insight about their own issues/biases.

This training will keep all of us safer and build a stronger community. It is the right thing to do not only for our diverse community members but also for our police officers who choose a career of service. They deserve to have a more comprehensive training that will better prepare them for the reality of the job that they will face upon graduation and entry to the police force. Ensuring that officers explore the issues of racial justice, and gain awareness about their biases related to race, class, addiction, gender, sexuality or ability is necessary to ensure that all of our community members are served and protected equally. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheria Clow Rollins, LCSW