

TESTIMONY OF Susan D'Alessandro
Millinocket, Maine

**TESTIFYING 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

To the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

**Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren
and Honorable members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee**

My name is Susan D'Alessandro of Millinocket and I am urging you to support LD 1447.

As you probably know, Millinocket has been the poster child of what's right and what's wrong with Law Enforcement today. I am happy to see several bills trying to address ways to improve the situation and this bill is one way. Having listened to several bills, even one on fireworks where the reason some gave for not addressing that situation was..."because no one would obey it"? The reasoning behind some of the testimony I've heard for LD 1447 was all the agencies who are looking to fill law enforcement positions and that if there are more expectations these positions won't be filled? In my opinion, being as qualified as possible for a position of such responsibility is not the reason for empty positions. While there are many reasons, most of them have to do with the other issues not being addressed and to use the popular analogy, it's more because the few rotten apples are destroying the barrel.

As you well know, we live in a complicated world and so much is required of our officers. If it were me, I'd want to be as qualified as I could. It would seem to me that there are ways to get this education. A few of those who testified spoke about how they may have started right out of high school or at a time when there were family demands they felt would interfere. We are not in the 1980's anymore and the requirements for many jobs are much more than they used to be—even food service requires courses and continuing education and many, many others require 60 credits. I believe there are ways to make it happen. What stands out is that Law Enforcement is more than a job, it's a career. If education is a road block I would question that reasoning. I'm especially concerned about the training of transport officers and "summer help" as well. In today's world, a crash course in how to use a gun is woefully inadequate.

Sadly, many of the helping careeers and public safety careers are not the highest paid. That's not the reason people chose those careers and if education is a stumbling block, they are looking at the wrong career and Millinocket is a perfect example of what happens when there are unqualified people.

Please support LD 1447!

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