



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

Sheriff Dale Lancaster, President

Sheriff Timothy Carroll, 1st Vice-President, Sheriff William King, 2nd Vice-President – Sheriff Barry Curtis, Secretary – Sheriff Todd Brackett, Treasurer – Sheriff Troy Morton, Immediate Past President – Sheriff Joel Merry, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

February 18, 2022

L.D. 1721 – An Act Regarding Dignity for Women in Correctional Facilities

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Jeffrey Trafton. I am the Sheriff of Waldo County and I'm here on behalf of the Maine Sheriffs' Association. Maine sheriffs discussed this bill and voted to **oppose** L.D. 1721 – An Act Regarding Dignity for Women in Correctional Facilities.

I want to be abundantly clear; Maine sheriffs are fully invested in ensuring our inmates, including female inmates, are cared for with dignity. When we met to discuss this bill, we were united in the concern that opposing a bill mandating dignity for women in our jails could be misinterpreted. All fifteen jails strive to promote an environment of dignity for our female inmates and will continue to make this a priority.

Our opposition comes from a state-wide staffing crisis that prevents us from the ability to ensure providing a female officer during transportation to and from medical appointments. While this expectation to provide female officers during medical appointments may seem feasible, with some counties facing staffing shortages of up to 50%, it's simply unattainable.

While Maine sheriffs understand and admire the intent of this bill, we simply cannot support language that mandates a service we're unable to provide. If the sponsor were to remove this mandate, the sheriffs would be happy to reevaluate our position but at this time, we cannot support as written.

Maine sheriffs appreciate the opportunity to present to this committee. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton
Maine Sheriffs' Association