



MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2431 • South Portland, Maine 04116-2431

Chief Edward J. Tolan (ret.), Executive Director, Tel: (207) 838-6583
email: mcopa@maine.rr.com Web site: www.mainechiefs.com

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Statement in Opposition to **L.D. 1479, An Act To Make Certain Traffic Infractions Secondary Offenses**

February 25, 2022

Maine Chiefs of Police Association strongly opposes L.D. 1479 because of the distinct threats to public safety that it would create if enacted. Here are a few examples of situations on our public roads that our officers would have to ignore absent some other offense:

- a vehicle traveling on the wrong side of the road against oncoming traffic;
- a child standing in the front seat of a motor vehicle;
- a vehicle with an expired registration but only if expired for more than 150 days, apparently giving a 'free pass' to the driver who manages to avoid registration long enough;
- a vehicle with an inspection sticker that has been expired for more than 7 months if there is no visible defect, thus ruling out such defects as bad brakes, loose ball joints and other serious safety hazards – a 'free pass' to the driver who avoids inspection long enough.

This bill is apparently an effort to prevent the profiling of certain drivers based on factors such as race or socioeconomic status. MCOPA is already on record as opposing this practice. We supported legislation in the last session that sets up a process to gather information in order to determine whether and to what extent law enforcement officers in Maine are engaged in profiling.

It is one thing to take measures against profiling when it actually occurs. It is another thing to make our public roads more dangerous by rendering unenforceable laws designed to reduce those dangers.

In addition to our concerns about safety on our roads, we believe it is bad public policy for the legislature to instruct law enforcement officers not to enforce laws that the legislature has enacted. If lawmakers do not want certain laws enforced, those laws should be repealed.

L.D. 1479 is a bad idea and we urge you to give it an Ought Not To Pass report.