



TOWN OF KITTERY

Office of the Town Manager

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Kendra Amaral
Town Manager

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Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee

Dear Senator Beeb-Center and Representative Salisbury,

We write today in support of LD673 to allow nonresidential programs for the Criminal Justice Academy. The current model has become a barrier to addressing the public safety needs of the State and is directly impacting the public safety of our communities.

We have been in a slow growing crisis in terms of recruiting and retaining quality law enforcement officers. The crisis is the result of retirements, negative attitudes towards law enforcement, and generally less desirable schedules and demands, especially early in one's career. The unnecessary bottle-neck of having a single Criminal Justice Academy, for the State of Maine, exacerbates the recruitment and retention challenges without offering any discernable benefits.

The concept of having nonresidential programs and regional programs is well tested throughout the country. These models better support the public safety needs of their communities, allow for more students to receive the vital training, and lower costs for the sponsoring community due to travel and housing. They are also less burdensome for the trainee who may have life circumstances that make it difficult to be away at a residential program for weeks at a time.

Consistency is a non-issue. We witness throughout the state and country consistency in minimum required learning objectives and outcomes across the spectrum of professions and specifically public safety related roles such as Firefighter, BLS and Paramedic, law degrees, etc. In fact, the diversification of these learning settings and organizers tends to result in innovation, improvement through collaboration and competition, and better outcomes overall. A monopoly rarely produces better outcomes.

Finally, having nonresidential programs removes a costly barrier for communities to provide Cadres and trainers. Nonresidential programs can reasonably be expected to see a growth in the number of available trainers and Cadres due to greater accessibility, the reduction in time away from home and agency, and a lower cost to the communities.

The current approach to the Criminal Justice Academy is outdated and does not provide the best outcomes for the communities or for the law enforcement officers. It is time Maine modernize its Criminal Justice Academy to achieve better outcomes and support the struggling public safety profession.

Sincerely,
Kendra Amaral
Town Manager

Chief Robert Richter
Kittery Police Department