

# T o w n o f C a r a t u n k

Office of Selectmen

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Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee  
State House Room 436

March 13, 10am

## **LD 673 – An Act to Direct the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to Develop a Nonresidential Law Enforcement Training Program**

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Caruso, the First Selectman of the Town of Caratunk, and I am testifying in support of LD 673.

Many small, rural towns have no local law enforcement and are reliant on the county sheriff's office and the state police. Citizens in rural areas many times wait hours, not minutes, for help to come. Given that both departments have shortages across the state, and given that it has become increasingly difficult to fill vacant positions, it is clearly evident that something must be done to address this dire situation and help to fill these law enforcement vacancies. With the wide-ranging coverage areas these officers are responsible for, it is likely that citizens would be waiting increasingly unreasonable and dangerous periods of time due to lack of sufficient staffing.

Due to the ever-increasing waves of lawlessness sweeping across our nation, coupled with the loss of officers due to attrition, retirement and harassment, Maine must work now to overcome this growing crisis in recruitment. A non-residential program will make it more feasible and attractive to new recruits.

Currently, Maine receives transfers of officers from outside of the state – even from states whose law enforcement training models are non-residential. It's only logical for Maine to offer an equitable program and join 50% of our country in offering non-residential training programs to accommodate dearly needed new recruits and rebuild Maine's law enforcement levels once again.

Please support our citizenry as well as our law enforcement officers. They need our support. Please vote yes for this effort and also to fund the extra staffing required to maintain the program and to develop additional paths to certification as the Department of Public Safety has requested

Thank you for your time, your service, and for your vote in support of LD 673.

Respectfully submitted,

**Elizabeth Caruso**  
Elizabeth Caruso  
*First Selectman/Chair*  
*Board of Selectmen*  
207.672.3030