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Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
To: Senator Anne Beebe-Center, Chair
Representative Suzanne Salisbury, Chair

Bill Number: LD 673

Hearing Date: Monday, March 13, 2023 at 10:00AM

I would like to express the support of the York Police Department for LD 673.

I believe this is a very important bill to allow the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to hold a non-residential academy when needed. As the training demands continually increase on Law Enforcement, the ability to meet these demands would be enhanced by the opportunity to hold a non-residential academy. It should be noted that on at least two occasions, the State of Maine has held non-residential academies. In fact, I am a graduate of a non-residential Maine academy that was held in South Portland. The training that I received was exceptional.

There are a tremendous amount of vacancies across state, county and local Law Enforcement agencies in the state of Maine which amplifies the need to attract qualified individuals to our profession. By providing the option of a non-residential academy, this will allow a variety of individuals to potentially enter this profession. A residential academy can be very challenging for individuals that may have young children, significant others that work full time or travel, or if they are a primary caregiver for an elderly parent. We must adapt and change with the times to accommodate our staffing needs while still adhering to the high standards of the profession. A non-residential academy can provide the same quality and standards of training.

Currently, I can hire individuals from out of state that attended a non-residential academy and obtain a waiver so that they do not have to attend the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. With a non-residential academy being overseen by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy it would ensure all standards and guidelines were uniformly adhered to.

Currently, the Maine Criminal Justice Academy depends on instructors from state, county and local agencies – these instructors are funded by their agencies and not the academy. At the York Police Department, I have over twenty certified instructors for the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Some of those instructors include but are not limited to, Cadre, instructors in Field Sobriety, Drug Recognition, Use of Force, and Mechanics of Arrest. One of the challenges that I have is the travel time it takes to get to the

academy. For example, there are some blocks of Mechanics of Arrest instruction that are only two hours. I then have to pay an officer to drive two hours to the academy to instruct for only two hours, and then drive back another two hours. With a non-residential academy in a closer geographical location, it would afford me the opportunity to provide more instructors.

Currently, there are only two academy classes per year, one that begins in August and another that begins in December. An additional non-residential academy would shorten the wait to get officers enrolled in an academy class.

This Bill simply gives the academy another option in developing and training new officers in the state of Maine. There is a national shortage of Police Officers and we need to attract the best individuals to this profession, and by providing the option of a non-residential academy it will allow us to fill vacancies across the state while adhering to the exceptional standards of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.

Sincerely,



Owen T. Davis
Police Chief
York, Maine Police Department