

To the Committee On Criminal Justice and Public Safety Members.

My apologies for not attending in person but I will be working during the hearing.

I want to offer the following testimony regarding LD 673 “An Act to Direct Maine Criminal Justice Academy to Develop a Nonresidential Law Enforcement Training Program”.

In October 2022, within a hundred yards of my home at Walton School in Auburn, a twelve-year-old fired twenty-two shots, wounding an individual at two in the morning. Violence like this or similar is happening across our State with increased frequency.

Part of the solution to addressing this crisis is adequately staffed public safety departments. Currently most departments Statewide are like the City of Auburn’s understaffed, often significantly.

At the October Auburn Neighborhood Watch meeting I learned the City’s Police Department had employees waiting to attend the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA). Due to MCJA capacity limits these individuals were unable to perform their full duties.

With the increasing violence in our communities, we cannot afford to have applicants not attending MCJA due to capacity limits. LD 673 is a step in the right direction.

In closing I urge the Committee to laser focus on finding solutions to MCJA capacity issues. Please do not stop your efforts until you have this problem solved.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the citizens of Maine.