



Maine County Commissioners Association

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LD 1247, Resolve, to Study Training in Racial Issues, Racial Justice and Social Issues at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and Study Additional Requirements for Law Enforcement Officers and Candidates

April 20, 2023

Chair Beebe-Center, Chair Salisbury, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as a member of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as chair of the legislative policy committee of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in **qualified support** of LD 1247.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

We support the intent of LD 1247. LD 1247 establishes a 17-member Law Enforcement Training and Qualifications Study Committee to review law enforcement officer training. The Committee is authorized to meet six times, and is required to report its recommendations for training for law enforcement officers and candidates in racial justice and social issues to the Legislature by January 3, 2024. The goal of LD 1247 is very important – ensuring that law enforcement officials, including those at the county level, have adequate training on issues such as racial equity, and that candidates have adequate access to opportunities for obtaining credentials, continuing education, and sources for financial aid.

Recommended amendment: Include a representative of county commissioners on the Committee. This bill currently includes a representative of a statewide association of municipalities, appointed by the President of the Senate, partly in recognition of the fact that municipalities employ local police officers trained by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. County commissioners occupy a position similar to municipal officials in that counties, through the county sheriff, hire law enforcement officers trained by MCJA. Having a county representative serve on this Committee would bring to the Committee the important perspective of county policymaking and governance, similar to the municipal governance perspective brought by the representative of a statewide association of municipalities on the Committee.

If the Legislature does decide to move forward with the formation of such Committee, we would ask that the MCCA be provided a representative to serve on the Committee to ensure that the perspective of county government is reflected in this important discussion.

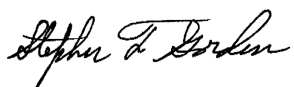
Conclusion. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, and if you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

Comments of MCCA re LD 1247

April 20, 2023

Page 2

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen T. Gorden".

Stephen Gorden

Chair, Legislative Policy Committee

cc: Commissioner Richard Dutremble, President, MCCA
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel