



Maine Chiefs of Police Association

P.O. Box 264 – Oakland, Maine 04963-0264

Chief Jason Moen - President

Chief Michael D. Tracy (Ret.), Executive Director, Tel: (207) 838-6583
email: mcopa@maine.rr.com Web site: www.mainechiefs.com

Statement in opposition to

L.D. 332, An Act to Establish Mandatory Minimum Sentences for Gross Sexual Assaults Against Children and Aggravated Sex Trafficking of Children

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

February 24, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and the President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in opposition to LD 332.

The mission of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association is to secure a closer official and personal relationship among Maine Police Officials; to secure a unity of action in law enforcement matters; to enhance the standards of police personnel, police training and police professionalism generally; to devise ways and means for equality of law enforcement throughout the state of Maine; to advance the prevention and detection of crime; to prescribe to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics; and to promote the profession of law enforcement as an integral and dedicated force in today's society sworn to the protection of life and property.

This bill seeks to set mandatory minimum sentences for gross sexual assaults and aggravated sex trafficking if the victim is under 12 years of age. Those mandatory minimums would range from 25 years to life depending on the type of case, whether the convicted defendant is a repeat offender, and if the person was convicted and sentenced in other jurisdictions for similar crimes.

Protecting our most innocent and vulnerable citizens is of the utmost importance to all members of the law enforcement community. Seeking justice becomes an even greater mission for us in cases involving victims who have not even reached the age of 12. However, several factors must be considered when advocating for what is best for the victim and their families.

Flexibility within our judicial system must remain in place so that each gross sexual assault and sex trafficking case involving children may be handled on a case-by-case basis, considering

factors such as available evidence, circumstances of the case, and further traumatizing the victim.

Law enforcement often collaborates with prosecutors on gross sexual assault cases to build the best case possible for a trial or a plea. When mandatory minimum sentences are in place, the prosecution and police need to build more watertight cases. This may result in more child victims being asked to testify or more child victims and their families refusing to cooperate with law enforcement out of fear of having to testify. Mandatory sentences, although well-intentioned, are misguided as they could lead to worse outcomes for our victims, those we are sworn to protect, and society as a whole if the offenders are not held accountable. It is for these reasons that we cannot support this proposal.

On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we respectfully ask members to oppose the passage of LD 332.