



Maine Chiefs of Police Association
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Statement in support of

L.D. 82, An Act to Amend the Workers' Compensation Laws by Extending Indefinitely the Presumption Applying to Law Enforcement Officers, Corrections Officers, E-9-1-1 Dispatchers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Persons Diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Joint Standing Committee on Labor

February 11, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and honorable members of the Labor Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department and serve as President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association in support of LD 82.

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.

As highlighted in this bill, there is a rebuttable presumption in Maine's workers' compensation statutes that the condition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) arose out of and in the course of a worker's employment if that worker is employed as a public safety official diagnosed as having post-traumatic stress disorder that resulted from work stress, as long as certain specified conditions are met. These employees may receive compensation and services under the Workers' Comp Act. However, when LD 1879 was enacted in 2022, the law was set to expire in October 2025. This proposal repeals that sunset provision.

As chiefs of law enforcement agencies, we are responsible for the health and safety of our officers. We do everything that we can to protect them against harm's way, both physically and

mentally, while in the line of duty and after their shift ends. We train for every situation so that our officers can return home safely at the end of the day. But there is no denying that a career in law enforcement can be a high-stress and dangerous profession, leading to high turnover rates and difficulty in finding qualified and interested individuals to serve in these roles. This only adds increased pressure and demand on our officers, who are a hundred times more likely to be exposed to a critical incident during a 25-year period than an average citizen.

Mental health conditions stemming from high-stress public safety careers are as serious as physical health conditions occurring while on duty. We are seeing increased cases of our officers impacted by PTSD and behavioral health issues. Law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every day must receive the services they need early on to help diagnose and treat their conditions and allow them to return to work once they have been rehabilitated.

We are pleased that the Legislature felt these conditions should be treated no differently from others when lawmakers enacted LD 1879 three years ago. We strongly believe that this law should remain in place permanently.

On behalf of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association, we respectfully request that the Committee vote Ought to Pass on LD 82.