



Maine Sheriffs' Association

"One Team, One Mission"

Sheriff Troy Morton, President

Sheriff William King, 1st Vice-President, Sheriff Dale Lancaster, 2nd Vice-President – Sheriff Barry Curtis, Secretary –
Sheriff Todd Brackett, Treasurer – Sheriff Kevin Joyce, Immediate Past President –
Sheriff Joel Merry, Past President-at-Large - Mary-Anne LaMarre, Executive Director

March 8, 2021

L.D. 375 – An Act To Create Greater Accountability in the Office of County Sheriff

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,

My name is Troy Morton. I am the Sheriff of Penobscot County and President of the Maine Sheriffs' Association. Maine Sheriffs worked closely with the sponsor of LD 375, Senator Lisa Kiem, and we support this bill, An Act To Create Greater Accountability in the Office of County Sheriff.

There is history behind today's bill that is important to revisit to fully understand why Maine sheriffs support LD 375. During the 129th Legislative session, Senator Kiem put forth a similar bill which was defeated in this committee and unanimously opposed by Maine's sheriffs. Our position at that time was not with the concept of the bill, but rather, with the mechanics behind its implementation. It is our collective position that Senator Kiem's diligent work in moving this concept forward, while respectfully addressing the concerns of sheriffs, is commendable.

Maine Sheriffs and Senator Kiem have the same objective in mind, to create a mechanism in which a county sheriff's actions, if objectionable, can be sent for an immediate judicial review. It is a privilege to serve the citizens of Penobscot County as sheriff, and like the other fifteen sheriffs in the state of Maine, it's an honor I value deeply. While the undeniable truth is that the overwhelming majority of sheriffs are men and women of integrity, we must hold accountable those who misstep. Maine deserves better, and those sheriffs who uphold their duties honorably deserve better.

In June of 2020, Maine Sheriffs stood with the Maine Chiefs of Police, the Maine Prosecutors Association, and the Maine Department of Public Safety to deliver a critical message in response to the tragic death of George Floyd. The letter discussed holding law enforcement accountable, recognizing that change begins with law enforcement leaders. We support LD 375 because we stand behind the promise of accountability. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Please vote to support LD 375.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Troy Morton
President, Maine Sheriffs' Association