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Testimony of Lt. Bruce Scott

IN OPPOSITION TO LD 712

**An Act To Eliminate the Requirement for an Inspection for a
Noncommercial Vehicle Less Than 20 Years Old**

Senator Diamond, Representative Martin and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Lt. Bruce Scott, and I am the Commanding Officer of the State Police Traffic Safety Unit. I am here today to testify on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police in Opposition to LD 712

LD 712 would essentially have the same affect on traffic safety as the LD 431 and LD 490 for vehicles less than 20 years old. Therefore, the previous testimony on LD234, LD354, LD431 and LD490 should all be considered a prelude to this testimony.

The average vehicle in Maine is approximately 11 years old and has approximately 132,000 miles on it. To push a vehicle to almost twice the years and mileage before requiring it to be inspected would clearly increase the number of defect related crashes and fatalities.

The Maine Motor Vehicle Inspection Program is effective at catching defects during a vehicle's annual inspection and thereby compels vehicle owners to fix and maintain their vehicles. Without these checks and balances some vehicle owners may never bring their vehicle to a garage to be looked at by a mechanic and may not be aware of serious safety issues until a critical component fails. A critical component failure can lead to tragedy, one that may have been prevented during an annual inspection.

Periodic motor vehicle inspections are critical and supported by numerous studies and anecdote. To summarize the studies and anecdote from which we draw these conclusions, please see below;

- 2008 Missouri State Highway Patrol concluded that the national average of vehicles involved in fatal crashes with defects that don't have an inspection program are **1 in 77.6** as opposed to their state that does annual inspections at **1 in 120.9**
- 2009 Pennsylvania's Vehicle Safety study conducted by Cambridge Systematics Inc. reported that their program saves between 127 and 187 lives per year and saves the tax-payers approx. 100 million dollars.
- 2017 University of Texas at Austin Center for Transportation Research on Texas' inspection program reported that vehicles with defects are twice as likely to result in fatal crashes. Please see testimony on LD 490 for full summary.
- AAMVA promotes periodic inspections and states that inspection programs can prevent vehicles failures on the highways and crashes that may result in injury or death.
- NHTSA states; "Each state should have a program for periodic inspections of all registered vehicles to reduce the number of vehicles with existing or potential conditions that may contribute to crashes or increase the severity of crashes that do occur and should require the owner to correct such conditions."
- The Maine State Police polled one of its largest inspection chains and they compiled data for three months and concluded that approximately 25% of all vehicles fail inspection. Supervisor McKiel pulled school bus inspection data and determined they have approximately a 30% out of service failure rate. The most common failures are for brakes, lights, exhausts, tires and suspension components.
- The state of Vermont has had an electronic inspection program since 2017 and report similar findings as the MSP. They show a 12.5 failure rate but acknowledge that most stations are performing pre-inspections and making the necessary repairs before they are actually submitted for inspections. Their number one failure item is brakes.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LD 712.

On behalf of the Department of Public Safety and the Maine State Police, I thank you for your time and would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have.

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