



Maine Chiefs of Police Association

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Statement in opposition to

L.D. 1480, An Act Regarding Exceptions for Persons Learning to Drive Who Have Not Yet Completed a Driver Education Course

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

April 22, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and honorable members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Jason Moen. I am the Chief of the Auburn Police Department, and 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 1480.

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.

The bill allows a person between the ages of 15 1/2 years to 18 years who has not completed a driver's education course but has successfully passed all parts of an examination other than the driving test to apply for a learner's permit. The bill also allows a person who is at least 18 years of age and who takes a driver's education course that includes only classroom instruction through an adult education program to apply for or be issued a learner's permit upon successful completion of the course.

One essential role of law enforcement officers is keeping folks safe on Maine's roadways and a key part of ensuring the public's safety is making sure that drivers have received the critical hands-on experience of operating a motor vehicle. A written test cannot fully assess this skill and why it is critical that persons wishing to operate a vehicle demonstrate they can do so safely in situations they will encounter daily such as merging lanes, checking for oncoming traffic, and

reacting to actions by other drivers. Additionally, teenage drivers statistically have higher accident rates due to factors such as inexperience, peer pressure, and distracting devices like cellphones and radios.

The driving test is a consistent way to measure that drivers meet a baseline skill before being allowed to operate a vehicle legally. When a person is issued a driver's permit, they have demonstrated through the written test that they understand the rules of the road and that they can safely drive a vehicle as revealed in the driving test. Removing the driving requirement would weaken Maine's driver's license process, lead to more unprepared drivers on our roadways, and increase the risk to the public.

For these reasons, the Maine Chiefs of Police Association asks the Committee to oppose LD 1480 and vote ought not to pass on this bill.