

**Town of Rome
Town Clerk
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Date: January 10, 2022

To: Senator Louis J. Luchini, Senate Chair
Representative Chris Caiazzo, House Chair
And members of the veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Julie L, Morrison, Town Clerk
Town of Rome

Re: LD 1821 – An Act to Make Interfering with an Election Official a Class C Crime

Position: Support

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association is in strong support of LD 1821 and I as Town Clerk of Rome am also in strong support.

Municipal clerks are charged with administering local, county, state, and federal elections. Threats, harassment, and intimidation to election officials are becoming more and more common across the nation. Maine is no exceptions to this unsavory trend. Although there is no formal reporting mechanism, at least one Municipal Clerk in Maine received a death threat after the 2020 election, only to find that this type of threat to an election official is only a misdemeanor Class D crime. I had an instance of harassment and intimidation during our Municipal Election March 2021. A gentleman brought an angry mob of 40 people with him to accuse me, The Town Clerk, of not running a legal election. He also took that time to degrade a selectman that was also on the ballot. The intimidation and harassment continue today.

A recent survey commissioned by the Brennan Center for Justice found that one in three election officials now feel unsafe doing their jobs. I for one am not running for Town Clerk this year for that reason.

Municipal clerks are your election professionals. We work with local election volunteers to administer elections, many of whom are retired or have worked elections for years. We are “boots on the ground” and work tirelessly to ensure the integrity of every election by following **ALL** the election laws.....including

the ones that aren't popular with or supported by one faction or another. We are asking for your support to ensure that members of the public who choose to intimidate or threaten any election officials are held accountable to the highest degree possible. These crimes must be categorized as more severe than Class D crime to better protect our election officials, but also to discourage this unscrupulous behavior.

I appreciate the opportunity to share this testimony with the Committee.

Julie L. Morrison
Town Clerk