



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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GOVERNOR

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COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. SAUSCHUCK
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

AGAINST

LD 1278, An Act to End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
10 AM Monday, 12 April 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and other distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Commissioner Michael Sauschuck and I am here to represent the Maine Department of Public Safety to testify in opposition of LD 1278, “**An Act to End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program**”.

This bill would terminate the Maine Information and Analysis Center (MIAC), which would adversely impact public safety in Maine by weakening our ability to receive, analyze, share information and to better coordinate efforts between our federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners.

Fusion Centers are authorized by federal law and each state has at least one Fusion Center operating within their jurisdiction, although some states, like Massachusetts, have more than one. There is a total of 80 fusion centers nationwide. In Maine our Fusion Center is known as the Maine Information and Analysis Center and was first established by Executive Order in 2006 by then Governor Baldacci. This national network of fusion centers is critically important as it allows for the sharing of information related to threats, in real-

time, across geographical and jurisdictional boundaries which we know criminal's do not respect or honor.

The MIAC represents a shared commitment between the federal government and the state and local governments who own and operate the Centers. Individually, each is a vital resource for integrating information from national and local sources to prevent and respond to all threats and hazards. The enhanced collaboration between the federal government, state, local and private sector partners represents the standard through which we view public safety and homeland security.

Fusion centers play a key role in homeland security and public safety pursuant to 6 USC Section 124(h) of the United States Homeland Security Act by protecting local communities from violent crime and other criminal threats through their daily operations. This involves gathering, analyzing, and sharing threat information and suspicious activity reports on a variety of threats and crimes including but not limited to violent crime, child abuse, human trafficking, domestic violence, cyber-security, election security, property crime, missing persons, critical-infrastructure protection, public health threats, and domestic violence extremism.

As analytic hubs, fusion centers provide a single point of contact for information sharing and are uniquely situated to empower frontline personnel to understand the local implications of national intelligence by tailoring national threat information into a local context and helping frontline personnel understand criminal threats they could encounter in the field, while also protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals in their communities.

The concept of information sharing is not new in law enforcement and public safety; it builds upon the information-led policing concept that has been applied with great success for some time by law enforcement agencies across the country. This information sharing process is crucial to ensuring that those charged with protecting our communities are better informed, and our people and institutions will be better protected. Public safety is improved when law enforcement, public safety and private sector partners at the federal, state and local level are sharing information and coordinating efforts. History has taught us the disastrous and deadly consequences that come from the failure to share information. Failures by public safety and government agencies to adequately prevent, mitigate and respond to violence and crime can often be traced to a breakdown in information sharing and a lack of communication.

In conclusion, we ask as you listen to the testimony today that you consider what is right for Maine and the people who live, visit, and work here. We ask that you carefully listen to the testimony provided today by Lieutenant Michael Johnston who will provide operational examples on the importance MIAC plays in the information sharing process. Please ask yourself whether Maine people are safer when law enforcement and the private sector are less informed. The Department of Public Safety and Maine State Police are committed to continued, engagement, outreach, and discussion on this very important issue. On behalf of the State Police and the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your careful consideration of these issues.

Sincerely

Michael Sauschuck
Commissioner Michael Sauschuck