



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony in support of LD-1278, “ An Act To End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program”.

Presented by Representative Jeffrey Evangelos, House District 91. Presented to the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on Monday, April 12, 2021.

Good morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and other distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. I am Representative Jeffrey Evangelos from Friendship and I represent House District 91. I am speaking today in support of LD-1278, “An Act To End the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program”.

As the summary indicates, this bill terminates the Maine Information and Analysis Center, also known as the Fusion Center. Enactment of this bill will save the State approximately one million dollars per year. But money is not at the center of my concern about the operations at the Fusion Center. Our remarkable political philosopher and second President John Adams once said: **“Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right, from the frame of their nature, to knowledge, as their great Creator, who does nothing in vain, has given them understandings, and a desire to know; but besides this, they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge; I mean, of the characters and conduct of their rulers.”** Therein lies the real reason why I support Rep. Warren's effort, and co-sponsored this critical legislation in a period today when criminal justice and police reform are sweeping the Nation.

The Fusion Centers were established in each state after the tragic attacks of 9/11 to gather investigative and intelligence information about possible terrorism

attacks against our country. In testimony last summer before a Joint Committee of Criminal Justice and Judiciary, Commissioner Sauschuck admitted that the Fusion Center was no longer primarily serving in this capacity. Legislators probing the activities of the Fusion Center discovered that “**mission creep**” had overtaken the agency. We were told that the Fusion Center began tracking motor cycle gangs several years after 9/11 occurred. Then, in stunning revelations from a courageous State Police Officer, who was forced to seek whistle blower protection against his employer, we learned that the Fusion Center had morphed into a Secret Police organization, which had turned against the constitutional rights of our own people. When confronted by these allegations, Commissioner Sauschuck refused to candidly answer questions from legislators.

Legislators learned that the Maine Information and Analysis Center Program began unconstitutional probes into constitutionally protected activities guaranteed under the First Amendment, including the right to peaceably assemble to seek redress of grievances. We learned that the Fusion Center began spying on Peace and Justice groups who were simply seeking an end to wars and armed conflicts. We learned that the Fusion Center was spying on people in Maine who were lawfully protesting against the power line construction in western Maine...to Massachusetts. We learned that the Fusion Center was collecting information about people who were lawfully exercising their 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment right, the right to purchase and own a firearm. Legislators also learned that the State Police and Fusion Center are utilizing facial recognition technologies and cell phone intercepts without obtaining warrants required under the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to our Constitution.

Incredibly, we learned MIAC was collecting information on counselors and staff at Seeds of Peace, a summer camp in Otisfield created in 1993 when the late foreign news correspondent John Wallach brought a group of Israeli and Arab teens together in a bid to end the cycle of violence in Palestine and Israel.

According to Brendan McQuade, a professor of criminology at the University of Southern Maine, the Fusion Center has morphed into an “overdeveloped mass surveillance apparatus.”

For all of the above reasons, I support ending the Fusion Center and ending the constitutionally prohibited activities engaged in by the Maine State Police. President John Adams would be turning over in his grave if he knew that the Bill of Rights he fought for was in such peril here in Maine.

Thank you for your consideration. I have attached various documentation for your review.

<https://www.pressherald.com/2020/02/09/maine-state-police-may-be-spying-on-you/?rel=related>

<https://www.pressherald.com/2020/06/24/maine-police-unit-gathers-information-on-citizens-commissioner-says/?rel=related>

[https://bangordailynews.com/2020/05/14/news/state/state-agency-illegally-collecting-data-on-mainers-claims-trooper-in-whistleblower-suit/?mc\\_cid=e3bc365765&mc\\_eid=914c0a1383](https://bangordailynews.com/2020/05/14/news/state/state-agency-illegally-collecting-data-on-mainers-claims-trooper-in-whistleblower-suit/?mc_cid=e3bc365765&mc_eid=914c0a1383)