



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Criminal Justice & Public Safety Roundup

The frenzied pace of leadership directed deadlines has created vacuums for the ability to deeply think about the impacts of policy decisions across all committees. Even as the nation pauses to honor those who respond to the worst that human society produces by adding 345 names to the Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Wall in Washington D.C., and two names to the Maine Law Enforcement Officer Memorial Wall, the Legislature will review and adopt policies that either help or hinder the daily work of those who are called to serve their communities in all public safety capacities, from police, dispatch and corrections to fire and EMS. What follows is a roundup of the work accomplished by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety (CJPS) Committee this week with the future to be determined and read in the voice of a Vogon* to make the outcomes more palatable.

“Vogon poetry is of course, the third worst in the universe...”

Police Policies & Procedures. On Monday, the CJPS committee held public hearings on multiple bills, some of which were quickly eliminated from further consideration. One bill would expand an obligation already limited by Maine’s Freedom of Access laws by requiring all police agencies to write their operational policies in clear language and post them to a website by January 1, 2026. Additionally, the bill would require agencies to update the posted policies within 90 days of any future amendments. LD 1784, *An Act to Require Police Departments to Publish and Make Accessible Their Policies and Procedures and Require Training of Officers*, sponsored by Rep. Warren (Scarborough), also establishes another deadline for producing a paper copy of the policies within seven days following a request, or providing a reason why the document can’t be produced in the prescribed timeframe.

A work session on the bill was held on Thursday with an amendment printed on Wednesday evening. Eventually, the bill was voted out on party lines following much discussion around whether pursuit policy was protected intelligence information and should be exempted from public disclosure requirements or not. Ironically, after an off-mic partisan caucus to discuss how they would vote on the sponsor’s amendment, the committee returned to the public to pontificate on the need for law enforcement to be open and transparent, before announcing their majority support for the proposal, with the Republican members accepting what is already in statute as sufficient and voting against the proposal.

The amended version of the bill clarifies that any policy currently subject to the intelligence and investigative records act was not intended to be included and acknowledges that the policies already subject to

fee collection under Title 1, section 408-A are still in play, so paper copies are not provided for free. A further amendment changed the policy publication limits so a website is not required and protected policies are not required to be disclosed. The functional effect of the majority vote was to take existing law under Title 16 and Title 1 and to merge current public disclosure obligations and exclusions using new language and to drop those requirements into Title 25 as well, resulting in a proverbial “belt and suspenders” approach to policymaking.

“One of the things Ford Prefect had always found hardest to understand about humans was their habit of continually stating and repeating the very very obvious.”

Sprinkler Plan Reviews. On Wednesday, the committee worked bills of significant municipal interest with mixed results for future impacts. LD 1005, *An Act to Allow Municipal Fire Departments with Trained Personnel to Conduct Sprinkler Plan Reviews*, sponsored by Rep. Lookner (Portland), originally would have allowed delegated authority for sprinkler plan reviews currently conducted by the Office of the State Fire Marshal for residential sprinkler systems.

Conversation on the bill seemed to misunderstand the nature of municipal sprinkler ordinances by assuming that municipalities were

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Home (Rule) Based Child Care

On Thursday morning, the Health and Human Services (HHS) committee held a public hearing on LD 1428, *An Act to Increase Access to Child Care for Maine Families*, sponsored by Speaker Fecteau (Biddeford). Childcare facilities, which are licensed through the HHS department and not generally on a municipal radar, became front and center for local leaders in this hearing as, once again, home rule authority was under fire.

In addition to allowing child care facilities to operate without an outdoor recreational space, under certain circumstances and proposed changes to Maine State Housing Authority rules regarding community rooms in low income developments, LD 1428 would mandate that, “a child care facility or a family child care provider is a permitted use in a municipal area that is zoned for residential purposes, subject to the same requirement for other residential properties.”

The presentation of the bill focused on the increasing need for

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making up their own standards for sprinkler systems that were overly onerous. The chair of the committee, Rep. Hasenfus (Readfield), stated he felt the problem was municipalities having different zoning requirements (which have nothing at all to do with sprinkler ordinances) that prohibited occupancy permits from being issued or required individuals to tear out non-compliant work. Other members of the committee felt that municipalities were making up their own standards, which added to the cost of housing construction.

None of this is accurate.

The state lacks a sprinkler code for residential systems and has only recently adopted the 2018 building code largely due to a lack of political will to regulate building standards for life safety more robustly out of fear it will impact projects. Under current law, all sprinkler systems require review by an engineer. Meanwhile, many communities experiencing significant development and greater density have adopted the 2024 national standards for fire protection, which establishes baseline residential system requirements that allow for smaller road standards, tighter setbacks from other buildings, and decreased reliance on firefighters.

A fully engulfed structure with no one inside because a sprinkler system limited the fire and allowed occupants to exit safely, does not require firefighters to enter the building and reduces the risks for everyone involved, including the adjacent neighborhood. Many Maine developers also tend to build in border states where the national standards are mandatory, and not new or unusual. Life safety is presumed to be too expensive for

the small benefit as developers claim, while others argue dead residents and firefighters are a greater cost to the community and sprinklers offer an effective and inexpensive harm mitigation solution.

Maine Fire Chiefs provided feedback to the committee sharing the fire service felt under attack over the sprinkler issues in all committees.

"I never could get the hang of Thursdays."

Despite the misinformation, the bill was amended as a resolve to allow the Fire Marshal with the Fire Commission and other stakeholders to review the best path forward, including creating a lower level "Maine" standard for residential sprinklers with cheaper components, standard contractor installation, and non-technical reviews. The group will report back to the CJPS committee in January on its progress and potential solutions.

"This planet has - or rather had - a problem, which was this: most of the people living on it were unhappy for pretty much of the time. Many solutions were suggested for this problem, but most of these were largely concerned with the movement of small green pieces of paper, which was odd because on the whole it wasn't the small green pieces of paper that were unhappy."

County Jail Funding. The next bills worked on Wednesday pertained to amending the state contribution to the operation of county jails, which can neither plan for the state of health for incoming residents, control the court sentencing practices, nor clear the backlog of cases to move violent offenders through the system. The lack of state contribution to its impact on the property tax for county operations is acutely felt in municipal tax bills. The state defines the terms and conditions of jail operations, the county complies and accepts the mandates, and the bill is sent to the property taxpayer who then stands on the desk of the municipal officers demanding cuts to library and charitable service contributions to pay for increasing county costs, which residents have no ability to control.

LD 852, *An Act to Reduce the Property Tax Burden by Adequately Funding County Jail Operations*, sponsored by Rep. Ducharme (Madison) was MMA's platform bill, and would have provided counties with better support and reduced the property tax burden for the ever-growing costs of running county jails. Along with linking future funding to

20% of the total general fund allocation to the Department of Corrections, the proposal relieves the property tax burden by requiring the state to pay 90% of the costs of the mandates enacted in 2021 for mental health and medically assisted treatment (MAT) and increases the state's baseline share to 20% of the total costs associated with judicial delays, housing state inmates, as well as mentally ill individuals too dangerous to wait in insecure facilities while forensic beds in state hospitals are unavailable.

Another bill, initiated by the Maine County Commissioners Association and sponsored by Rep. Salisbury (Westbrook), LD 719, *An Act to Amend the Share of State Funding for the County Jail Operations Fund*, asked for the state to fund a straight 35% of costs of county jail operations. Complicating the discussion was the constant moving target for what constitutes information accepted by the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Administration including the format and timing.

"The Answer to the Great Question... Of Life, the Universe and Everything...Is..... Forty-Two."

The County Corrections Professional Standards Council has consistently submitted information to the DOC and met with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services with little effect, as the budget has continued to flat fund county jail operations. As covered in the February 7, 2025 *Legislative Bulletin*, the rules on what was needed for the submission of information were often changed, not communicated, and at no time did the state share its preference for how the information should be presented; that is, until legislation was introduced to address the issue. Excuses for not increasing the funding then pivoted to the need for more cooperation of undisclosed activities between disparate independent governmental entities, as though they were equally funded state departments. The department's testimony also pointed to a lack of clear audited data from each facility, though it is submitted to the DOC daily, and some financial information monthly.

A lack of data sharing among entirely different government entities is an interesting position to hold considering the state routinely uses local governments to transfer information between their own departments because they do not have connected data sources resulting in required double reporting

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HEARING SCHEDULE

For the week of May 19, 2025

Note: It appears as though the legislative presiding officers have waived the requirement that bills be advertised for public hearings two weeks in advance; therefore, you should check your newspapers for Legal Notices as there may be changes in the hearing schedule. It is not uncommon at this time of the session to have a bill printed one day and a public hearing scheduled within a couple of days. Weekly schedules for hearings and work sessions can be found on the Legislature's website at: <http://legislature.maine.gov/calendar/#Weekly/>. Below are the public hearings for which we have received notice prior to the publishing of this Legislative Bulletin.

MONDAY, MAY 19

Environment & Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-4149

LD 1976 *Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 379: Compensation for Impacts to High-Value Agricultural Land from Solar Energy Development,*

a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection

LD 1982 *An Act to Ensure Uniformity in the Regulation of PFAS*

Health & Human Services
Room 209, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1317

LD 1737 *An Act to Ensure the Future of Maine's Sporting Camp Heritage*

1:30 p.m.

LD 1946 *An Act to Clarify the Eligibility of Certified Recovery Residences for Bridging Rental Assistance Program Housing Vouchers*

LD 1952 *An Act Regarding Home Heating Fuel Assistance*

LD 1959 *An Act to Prohibit the Department of Health and Human*

Services from Reducing General Assistance Reimbursement Maximums for Payment of Costs of Providing Emergency Shelter

Judiciary
Room 438, State House, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1327

LD 1978 *An Act Regarding Government Liability Related to Sexual Acts Toward Minors*

1:00 p.m.

LD 1259 *An Act to Enhance Public Safety in Maine by Defining the Relationship Between Local and Federal Law Enforcement*

LD 1971 *An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities*

Criminal Justice & Public Safety Roundupcont'd

of similar information to two state agencies.

Of note, audited county financials, as required in state statutes, are provided to the Office of the State Auditor, annually. Evidently, they don't communicate. Though one member of the committee pointed out the jail portion of the county audit was just two lines and that isn't enough detail. The details live in the DOC managed database, however.

"We demand rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty!"

After a painful debate that ranged from mischaracterization of council functions to obvious backdoor skullduggery and failure to read any material submitted on open accounting, LD 719 was turned into just a resolve, with a report back from the standards council in January and a report on how jail audits need to occur. LD 852 was converted into a \$4 million appropriation for county jails for each year of the upcoming biennium. This would be additional funding, outside of the state budget and unrelated to the medically assisted treatment initiative funding but would require legislative endorsement from the special appropriations table.

The hero of the debate award goes to Rep.

Ardell (Monticello) who correctly pointed out that it was clear in 2019 that over 70% of inmates were categorized as state sanctioned, a term for those held on violations of state release, unable to stand trial and forensically ill with no available bed, or significant violent crimes destined for prison awaiting trial. He remarked that the state is not living up to its obligations to the counties. Followed closely by Rep. Nutting (Oakland) who pointed out that the problem is real, and the gap will be filled by the property taxpayer and making it clear that he has no problem going back to the property taxpayers in his communities to inform them that the legislature believes that they should pay for mandates the state places on counties. He added, however, that the council needs to report, as they evidently had not.

As a counter, Penobscot County Commissioner Andre Cushing offered that since a large number was likely to be discarded, the resolve would allow more time to gather data and provide the next administration with the information to determine the appropriate financial contribution.

Essentially, the effort brings the appro-

priation to exactly what county jails were provided in Governor Mills' original annual budget proposal, including a \$4 million MAT appropriation, which was later stripped out by the CJPS committee's budget recommendation, now awaiting a people's veto effort. Now, the additional \$4 million investment entails an appropriations table fight for the increase to actually come to fruition. Future funding will be determined by the quality of the report from the unfunded County Corrections Professional Standards Council and their ability to sway the people who haven't listened for the past three years, which for reference received a report from the said mysterious council in January. But that was so long ago everyone forgot. Clearly no one is listening.

"So long, and thanks for all the fish."

*As described by Wikipedia, the "Vogons are a fictional alien race from the planet Vogosphere in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*—initially a BBC Radio series by Douglas Adams—who are responsible for the destruction of the Earth, in order to facilitate an intergalactic highway construction project for a hyperspace express route."

Property Tax Relief Task Force

May the force be with you....

The list of work sessions was long for members of the Taxation Committee on Thursday morning, all dealing in one way or another with property tax relief. To set the stage, Dr. Michael Allen, Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) Associate Commissioner of Tax Policy, provided an update on the Property Tax Fairness Credit (PTFC) and pointed out that refundable credits and student loan repayment credits have grown significantly since 2021. Refundable credits are the number of dollars that the state is essentially returning to taxpayers. The discussion and the primer were timely as several of the bills discussed by the committee proposed in one way or another to amend the PTFC as a way for delivering property tax relief.

However, the bill of great interest, at least from the perspective of municipal officials, was LD 1770, *An Act to Provide Immediate and Long-term Property Tax Relief to Maine Households*, sponsored by President Daughtry (Cumberland County). As summarized by the analyst, the bill proposes to: (1) increase the PTFC from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for individuals under 65, and from \$2,000 to \$2,500 for individuals 65 and older; and (2) establish a Property Tax Relief Task Force directed to explore avenues for reducing the burdens placed on the property taxpayers, with a report due in December 2025. He also suggested the addition of an emergency preamble due to the short time frame for the task force to complete its work and noted that while the bill sponsor could not attend the work session, she had sent a detailed memo with suggested amendments to the bill that fed discussion on a variety of aspects and the task force itself.

Via the ensuing discussion, it became evi-

dent that the task force approach was generally supported by most committee members, with differing ideas on how to arrive at the end goal of providing sustainable and real property tax relief to Maine people. Sen. Bickford (Androscoggin County) felt strongly that the Taxation Committee is a tax task force in its own right and that creation of an additional committee was not necessary on top of the work already done.

Concern was also raised about the partisanship of the task force makeup, given how the members would be appointed, and who would be doing the appointing. It was also suggested that the list of task force members be amended to ensure that the interests of both rural and urban areas would be considered throughout the study. Many ideas were floated, including appointing public members from each of the Congressional Districts, as well as adding duties to the task force such as examining options for municipal consolidation by throwing incentives at them to lower spending.

At one point during the discussion, Rep. White (Ellsworth) stated that something had to be done to curb municipal spending, particularly since municipalities get a lot of their money from the state. While that sentiment was also shared at the public hearing held on May 1, Rep. Rudnicki (Fairfield) also claimed that the Legislature was at fault since the year prior they had repealed the property tax levy limit, also known as LD 1. On that note, while the LD 1 repeal is often blamed for increasing property tax spending, there is no way to quantify that statement since the municipal budgets being adopted now are impacted by the levy limit's repeal, as it took effect in August 2024, long after municipal

budgets had been adopted.

Sen. Bickford, who was finally warming up to the idea of a task force, suggested that the duties also include a review of nontaxable property from both nonprofit organizations and governmental property, to get a sense of how it is affecting property taxes for the average Mainer.

While all committee members eventually grew to favor the task force approach, a majority of the committee's three-hour discussion on LD 1770 was spent discussing who would be appointed to serve on the committee and the duties assigned to the task force. Rep. Rudnicki recommended the appointment of an elected municipal official and not a town manager, since they wield too much power as it is.

Another part of the task force proposal seriously debated was whether an extension to the deadline to meet and report should be granted, given the little time the group would have once the bill took effect. The committee lobbied back and forth but ultimately settled on requiring the submission of an interim report in December 2025, leaving the door open to grant additional time in case the charge was so large and challenging that the task force needed to continue into the next year.

Dr. Allen supported that idea, suggesting that this could turn into a very large task that may require more time to accomplish. He further mentioned federal tax implications if certain measures at the federal level pass, which are all unknown at this point.

With all committee members in support of creating the task force, LD 1770 was passed unanimously "ought to pass as amended." To

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Home (Rule) Based Child Carecont'd

childcare access and the constraints imposed on the creation of new childcare facilities by local ordinances and zoning prohibitions. One person testifying in support cited the need to reduce regulatory and financial burdens and to prevent lengthy and costly zoning appeals processes. Sound familiar?

Municipal officials are well aware of the recent and ongoing issues regarding the erosion of home rule authority, specifically regarding development. Phrases like "unnecessarily hamper" and "stymie entrepreneurs" imply that municipalities are the

enemy of development when, in fact, municipalities should be considered partners. Comprehensive plans and ordinances are created in an open and transparent manner and ultimately approved by the voters, through either a town meeting vote or by the locally elected council. Despite these long-standing processes, this bill would create a new statewide requirement in statute, forcing municipalities to allow childcare facilities in residentially zoned areas. No consideration is given to the impact on infrastructure, like water, wastewater, roads,

or public safety. Since this one size fits all solution provides no reference to technical or financial support in managing amendments to ordinances or upgrades to infrastructure needed because of this bill, municipal officials will find themselves dealing with yet another unfunded state mandate.

It's time, once again, to reiterate that the state-local partnership only works when everybody agrees to play nicely in the sandbox. The work session for this bill has not yet been scheduled.

Property Tax Relief Task Forcecont'd

be clear, the amendment: (1) strikes the section of the bill dealing with PTF, as that issue was addressed in separate legislation; (2) clarifies the task force membership; (3) requires one joint meeting with the Taxation Committee; (4) authorizes the committee chairs to appoint task force subcommittees; and (5) adds the impact of unfunded mandates and nontaxable property to the task force's charge.

After a break, the committee quickly disposed of several other bills seeking to, in one way or another, implement the changes to be explored by the task force. Of the bills voted "ought not to pass" and of greatest municipal interest are, LD 1481, *An Act to Amend the Law Governing Stabilization of Property Taxes on Homesteads of Individuals 65 Years of Age or*

Older, sponsored by Rep. Parry (Arundel); LD 1541, *An Act to Provide Property Tax Relief for Senior Residents*, sponsored by Sen. Martin (Oxford County); LD 432, *RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Allow Municipalities to Apportion Real and Personal Property Taxes on the Basis of Property Classification*, sponsored by Rep. Mastraccio (Sanford); LD 1304, *RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Limit Property Tax Increases for Individuals 65 Years of Age or Older and Shift the Tax Burden to State Gaming Revenues*, sponsored by Sen. Baldacci (Penobscot County); LD 1537, *Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study Lowering Property Taxes by Revising the State-Municipal*

Revenue Sharing Program, sponsored by Sen. Nangle (Cumberland County); LD 1591, *An Act to Grant a Municipality Authority to Tax Property According to Use*, sponsored by Rep. Ankeles (Brunswick); and LD 1610, *RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Apportion Differentiated Tax Rates on Real Property According to Use*, sponsored by Rep. Ankeles (Brunswick). Unfortunately, LD 1729, *An Act to Increase the Rate of Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost as a Result of the Maine Resident Homestead Property Tax Exemption*, sponsored by Sen. Bennett (Oxford County) on behalf of MMA's policy committee, was also on the kill list.

IN THE HOPPER

(The bill summaries are written by MMA staff and are not necessarily the bill's summary statement or an excerpt from that summary statement. During the course of the legislative session, many more bills of municipal interest will be printed than there is space in the Legislative Bulletin to describe. Our attempt is to provide a description of what would appear to be the bills of most significance to local government, but we would advise municipal officials to also review the comprehensive list of LDs of municipal interest that can be found on MMA's website, www.memun.org.)

Criminal Justice & Public Safety

LD 1980 *An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Stakeholder Group to Examine and Improve the Recruitment, Retention and Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers* (Sponsored by Sen. Beebe-Center of Knox Cty.)

This bill implements recommendations from a stakeholder group created to examine the recruitment, retention and wellness of law enforcement officers by: (1) requiring a death certificate to note if the deceased had previously worked as a first responder; (2) directing the Maine Criminal Justice Academy to incorporate wellness training and critical incident briefing in its training programs; and (3) providing an ongoing appropriation to fund a wellness coordinator position within the Department of Public Safety. The bill also creates the 11-member Law Enforcement Retention Advisory Council, which includes members representing statewide associations of police, law enforcement, chiefs of police, and sheriffs, and a retired law enforcement officer, to advise the Department of Public Safety on the development and implementation of state and local policies and programs to improve recruitment, retention and wellness of law enforcement officers.

Health & Human Services

LD 35 *An Act to Strengthen Local Emergency Medical Services by Increasing the MaineCare Reimbursement Rate for Ambulance Services* (Sponsored by Sen. Curry of Waldo Cty.)

Beginning on July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028, the Department of Health and Human Services is directed to increase the MaineCare reimbursement rate for ambulance services to 140% of the average allowable reimbursement rate under Medicare.

LD 1429 *An Act to Provide Full Reimbursement for Emergency Ambulance Services Provided to MaineCare Members* (Sponsored by Rep. Fredette of Newport)

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse providers of emergency ambulance services at the full rate provided to MaineCare members, which includes municipal, quasi-municipal and private ambulance services, as well as fire department emergency medical services. The bill also requires the department to adopt rules to implement the reimbursement requirement and beginning on December 1, 2025, to submit an annual report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services containing data on the number and amount of reimbursement distributed and recommendations for improving reimbursement policies.

LD 1737 *An Act to Ensure the Future of Maine's Sporting Camp Heritage* (Sponsored by Sen. Stewart of Aroostook Cty.)

This bill establishes a separate license for a commercial sporting camp and prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from requiring a commercial sporting camp located in an area without a municipal water supply to install sprinkler systems or to make upgrades or improvements to existing plumbing systems or septic systems provided that existing systems are operational. The bill also defines a commercial sporting camp as a building or group of buildings devoted primarily to offering lodging, meals, equipment and professional guide services for a fee to persons engaged in hunting, fishing or snowmobiling, if the commercial sporting camp: (1) is located in an unorganized territory, abuts an unorganized territory or is in a municipality or other organized territory of less than 1,500 residents; (2) has a caretaker present on site or nearby; (3) does not operate primarily to serve day visitors; (4) is not a hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, campground, children's camp or educational camp or a housekeeping cabin that is not qualified to serve meals; (5) is open to the public and is not restricted to members only; (6) is not organized as a nonprofit organization; (7) is authorized to collect sales tax; and (8) does not primarily solicit reservations on electronic platforms for short-term rentals.

Judiciary

LD 1971 *An Act to Protect Workers in This State by Clarifying the Relationship of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies with Federal Immigration Authorities* (Sponsored by Rep. Dhalac of South Portland)

This bill clarifies the relationship between state and local law enforcement
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IN THE HOPPER (cont'd)

agencies and federal immigration authorities by: (1) prohibiting a law enforcement agency from stopping, investigating, interrogating, arresting or detaining a person for immigration enforcement purposes, including in response to a hold request, immigration detainer or administrative warrant issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS), or providing the federal agency access to inmates, inmate information, or personnel to assist immigration enforcement activities; (2) clarifying that upon a request from the USDHS a law enforcement officer can arrest and detain a person due to suspected criminal activity for reasons that are not solely based on the person's immigration status; (3) establishing the permissible scope of collaboration between a law enforcement agency and joint law enforcement task force; (4) requiring a law enforcement agency to release as soon as possible and detain no longer than 48 hours a person determined to be held solely for immigration enforcement purposes; (5) establishing duties and prohibitions for law enforcement agencies regarding immigration issues of inmates; and (6) prohibiting state employees other than law enforcement officers from inquiring into immigration status unless the inquiry is required by law or necessary to provide the service sought by the resident.

LD 1978 An Act Regarding Government Liability Related to Sexual Acts Toward Minors (Sponsored by Rep. Gramlich of Old Orchard Beach)

This bill adds to the list of exceptions from immunity under the Maine Tort Claims Act, the actions of a government employee, including municipalities, counties, and schools, who commits a sexual act against a minor or who engages in a sexual act with a minor while acting in or under the scope of authority whether on or off the entity's premises. The bill also allows

a claim to be filed against a government agency regardless of the date of the sexual act or if the current statutory limitations have already expired.

State & Local Government

NO LD# An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Public Easements and Provide General Fund Allocations for the Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission (Presented by the Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission)

This bill implements the recommendations of the Abandoned and Discontinued Roads Commission, which includes: (1) defining the allowable repairs and maintenance activities that can take place on public easements and providing limited liability protections to abutting owners, lessees or occupants electing to repair or maintain a public easement for individual or public use; (2) providing that abutters to a public easement are not responsible for environmental damage if there is credible evidence that the violation was committed by another person; (3) enabling abutters to a public easement who receive a homestead exemption to request that the municipal legislative body vote to provide a minimum level of year-round maintenance and repair on a public easement that serves one or more year-round residences; (4) defining minimum maintenance to include annual grading, repair, maintenance, plowing, and the replacement of drains and culverts required to keep the road reasonably passable; (5) requiring municipalities to place signs at intersections of public ways and easements reading "Minimum Maintenance Road – Travel at Your Own Risk;" and (6) providing an annual appropriation of \$6,500 to reimburse members of the commission for expenses.