

TESTIMONY  
OF  
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MAINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Veterans and  
Legal Affairs

Hearing Date: March 7, 2022

“An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2022, and June 30, 2023”

Good Afternoon Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Hickman and Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Michael Sauschuck and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety. I am here today to testify in support of the supplemental budget, LD 1995.

Overall Supplemental Budget

As Governor Mills said during her state of the state address, “Maine people deserve every ounce of hard-won progress that we have achieved despite the pandemic. And Maine people have earned the progress that is yet to come.” This supplemental provides additional relief to Maine people and ensures the continuity of the programs and services so vital to Maine residents. The Governor has proposed giving back half the surplus to Maine taxpayers to help them confront inflation, and she set money aside in the Budget Stabilization Fund and other important reserves to ensure we can continue to fully fund public education and revenue sharing, two major accomplishments of this Legislative body and this Administration. The Governor also focuses

sharply on addressing Maine's biggest challenges, including tackling our state's longstanding workforce shortage to improve our economy, providing an affordable, world-class education for Maine people, and bolstering a health care system that has been pushed to the brink because of the pandemic.

The Governor seeks to do this in a fiscally-responsible manner that provides needed assistance and support to Maine people while heeding the warnings of Maine's nonpartisan Revenue Forecasting Committee, which has expressed significant concern about shifting economic conditions, calling the fiscal environment "unprecedented" and "variable" and noting that the accuracy of their forecast becomes less reliable in future years, leading them to urge caution in the use of the revenues. The supplemental builds on the investments of the biennial and Maine Jobs Plan – both enacted within the last seven months.

#### Department Overview

The Department of Public Safety was established to serve the people by providing, coordinating, and leading a responsive and comprehensive public safety system to protect their lives, rights, and properties. This broad mission is accomplished with 628 positions spread across 10 bureaus. The Bureaus are Administration, Capitol Police, Consolidated Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal's Office, Gambling Control, Highway Safety, Maine Criminal Justice Academy, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Maine State Police. My testimony today will focus on the Gambling Control Unit.

The Gambling Control Unit (the Unit) supports a five-member Board that licenses and regulates companies and employees associated with two casinos, the distribution of casino-related equipment, and advance deposit wagering allowing bets on horse races throughout the country.

The Unit also regulates fantasy sports contests and charitable non-profit Games of Chance, Beano, and Bingo.

There is one (1) Gambling Control Unit-related initiative which is on page A-148. This initiative provides one-time funding to allow for electronic submittal of casino employees' applications through the online licensing database. We currently use paper applications and the move to an electronic system will make the process much more efficient. An employee can be temporarily licensed to work on the same day of submission electronically versus paper which can take 3-5 days and potential employees are finding other employment in that time of delay. This measure is requested and very much supported by the two casinos in Maine. This increases the Other Special Revenue Funds All Other by \$66,370 in FY22 only.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.