

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

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Labor and Housing

Hearing Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021

**“An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, 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 Rafferty and Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Michael Sauschuck and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). I am here today to testify in support of the biennial budget, LD 221.

**Overall Budget**

As Governor Mills said, at a time when Maine people are hurting when small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open, when the ranks of the unemployed have swelled, and when we are fighting a deadly virus all around us, we are proposing balanced budgets as required by the Constitution that continues efficiencies, good fiscal management, and curtailments to cover projected revenue shortfalls for all three fiscal years. They focus on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to rebuild the State’s public health infrastructure and protecting essential health care, education, and life-saving services. They do not change Maine tax rates and they maintain the Budget Stabilization Fund. With a future made unpredictable due to the ongoing pandemic, these budgets make good on the promise of government, which is to protect and support the wellbeing of our people and institutions.

## **Department Overview**

DPS 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 625 positions spread across ten bureaus. The Bureaus are Administration, Capitol Police, Consolidated Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal, Gambling Control, Highway Safety, Maine Criminal Justice Academy, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, and the Maine State Police.

DPS has two language sections to discuss today which are listed under Retirement System, Maine Public Employees. Both of these sections clarify the various job categories within DPS that are eligible to participate in Special Plans of the Maine Public Employees Retirement Plan. Under these special plans a computation of benefits is such that a person may retire at age 55 with either 10, 20 or 25 years of creditable service.

Part KKK on page 47 of the language section clarifies the various job categories within the Consolidated Emergency Communication Bureau of DPS that are eligible to participate in the 1998 Special Plan. When eligible positions were previously added to the plan, the Emergency Dispatch System Administrators were mistakenly omitted. This language clarification adds these positions to the 1998 Special Plan.

Part LLL also on page 47 is amended to clarify job classifications in the Fire Marshal's Office within DPS that are eligible to participate in these special retirement plans. The Assistant State Fire Marshal in Charge of Investigations position was recently created and filled, and this clarification would add that position to the Special Plan. This amendment would also add the recently created position of Assistant State Fire Marshal in Charge of Inspections to the list of job categories that are eligible to participate in the 1998 Special Plan. It is recommended that the current wording of the amendment be revised to reflect the indicator of investigations and inspections to ensure that the recently created

positions of Assistant State Fire Marshal in Charge of Investigations and in Charge of Inspections be referenced appropriately in each special plan.

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