

Testimony for LD522 3/2/2023

Lisa Evans

In February of 2022, my husband and I were driving through Portland on I 295, when a 4" slab of ice flew off the Mack truck in front of us, imploding our entire front windshield. Water saturated my husband, who was sitting in the passenger seat, from the foot long opening in the windshield. The only way I could see to get us off the highway was to look out the hole. The truck driver was either oblivious to what had happened, or didn't feel compelled to stop, because they didn't.

The first thing the policeman said to us was, "you're lucky to be alive". To be honest, dying hadn't occurred to me. I was more angry and in shock that the event had even happened. I was absolutely out of my mind that a driver wouldn't check the roof of their vehicle for the safety of others. And then the policeman told me that Maine didn't have a law regarding this.

I immediately contacted Bruce White, my state representative. I appreciate the work he has done to bring this bill to the table, for the second time.

In the last year since my own experience, I've paid more attention as I've seen ice-related cracked windshields and near death experiences reported in the news, all over New England. It's time to hold drivers in Maine accountable and responsible for the safety of others. I want to drive behind a vehicle whose driver is hopefully obeying the law.

LD522 is not perfect, in my opinion. I don't agree with the 48-hour clause. However, after speaking at length with Lt. Scott, I understand the complexities of the issue, where other entities are concerned. Notably the Trucker's Association. I understand that this may be as good as it gets.

I am not naïve. If LD522 passes we may not see an end to flying ice, cracked windshields and potential human injury. But if it does pass, it puts the responsibility and ownership of safe driving practices on every driver. It's a lawful reminder that accountability is punishable.

When the ice hit my car, it never dawned on me that I could have died. Calmly, I was able to find visibility through our totaled windshield, and in our totaled car, and was able to drive off the highway. I've been driving for over 40 years. I have a 19 year old son. Would his reaction have been the same as mine, as a non-experienced driver? Would the teenage driver in your house?

I ask you all to think about this, as you contemplate enacting a bill that makes sense.



