

## OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

Date: February 23, 2021  
To: Transportation Committee  
From: Sam Praver, Legislative Analyst

### **LD 258 – An Act To Expand Eligibility for Special Emergency Medical Services Registration Plates to Ambulance Operators**

**SUMMARY:** This bill expands the eligibility for a special emergency medical services registration plate to include ambulance operators.

#### **TESTIMONY:**

**Proponents:** *Rep. McDonald*

- Ambulance drivers are currently only eligible for EMS special license plates if they are also trained as Emergency Medical Technicians.
- The purpose of emergency medical services registration plates is to easily identify emergency medical service personnel when they arrive on the scene or are traveling to an ambulance bay during an emergency situation. This is desirable for ambulance drivers.
- Matters especially in rural or island communities given the small size.
- An ambulance driver may arrive on the scene of an emergency in their personal vehicle rather than an ambulance, and it would be wise to be able to quickly recognize that he or she is responding to help.

**Opponents:** *Maine Fire Chiefs Association*

- This would allow an unlicensed person, such as an Ambulance driver to be able to get an EMT license plate. This could cause confusion for a patient or their family if they were to call for an ambulance and that personnel drove directly to the scene in their own personal vehicle.

**Neither for Nor Against:** *Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Maine EMS*

- Maine EMS requests that this bill be tabled until other legislation is heard regarding adding these individuals as licensed persons under Title 32, Chapter 2-B. This change would also allow Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs) to have access to the vanity plates.
- Alternatively, Maine EMS would request to amend the bill so that only those who have “driving the ambulance” as part of their job duties are eligible.
- If the expanded eligibility for these plates results in BMV needing to issue more than 200 new sets, production would cost around \$7,000 and make around 700-800 sets.

#### **CURRENT STATUTE OR LAW:**

Only an emergency medical services person licensed under [Title 32, chapter 2-B](#) whose status is certified by the Director of Maine Emergency Medical Services may be issued a set of special emergency medical services registration plates. ([29-A MRS §519-A](#))

"Emergency medical services' person" means any person who routinely provides emergency medical treatment to the sick or injured. ([32 MRS §83, sub-§12](#))

**NOTES:**

- This bill expands eligibility for a special emergency medical services registration plate to “an operator” of an ambulance that is licensed under Title 32, chapter 2-B. This language is broad and could include those who are authorized to driver an ambulance but who have not completed emergency vehicle operator training.
- At the public hearing both the sponsor and Maine EMS commented that another bill is coming that would license ambulance operators under Title 32, chapter 2-B, and recommended amending this bill to specify that licensed ambulance operators are eligible for the plates should the other bill pass.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No preliminary fiscal information available at the time of writing.