

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Rod MacPhie. I am a resident of Scarborough and work as a game day usher for the Portland Sea Dogs and the Maine Celtics. I am here today to speak in favor of LD 2258.

I was born in Houlton and have lived throughout New England, New York, and Maryland before returning to Maine 25 years ago. Wherever I have lived I've been touched by baseball. While growing up in Boston in the 50's and 60's I became an avid Red Sox fan, and even had the opportunity to go to the 1967 World Series, during the "Impossible Dream" season.

When I moved with my parents to New York I lived the "Miracle Mets" experience during the 1969 championship season. Then, when I moved to Baltimore for my job I became enthralled with the Baltimore Orioles "Orioles Magic" community culture. I was there when the O's won the 1983 World Series over the Phillies. In fact, I was living in Baltimore when Camden Yards was built. I documented the whole process with my camera. In my life as a baseball fan I have learned in detail about the impact a baseball team can make on a town and the impact a stadium can make on the culture and identity of a community and geographical region.

When I retired from UTZ Quality Foods as an assistant district manager it seemed natural for me to inquire about working for the Sea Dogs. I have been a teammate in the Sea Dogs organization since the 2015 season when I was hired as a gameday usher. I enjoy the atmosphere, my fellow teammates, and the fans so much that I became an ambassador greeting and helping fans. My background in sales, healthcare, and business made it a natural fit for me. I enjoy this position very much and love working with my fellow ushers and my boss Chris Cameron.

My healthcare background has been particularly helpful. While working for Alpha One Medical, I spent time with many disabled people, and helped them get the equipment they needed to make their life better. Those experiences help me treat each conversation with great care and attention. I'm able to greet each fan as though I want to help and enhance their Hadlock Field experience, especially young kids and fans with special needs or disabilities.

I have been a fan of the Sea Dogs since the inaugural season, and I feel such passion and loyalty to the ballpark and the organization. Over the years I have read several books about the history of ballparks. In them they refer to stadiums as "cathedrals" and "hallowed ground." I can tell you first hand, that is exactly how fans and the community feel about Hadlock Field.

I have lived in Scarborough since we moved back home in 1999. We love the community and have met so many great people. I love the Sea Dogs organization - the comradery with the staff, fans, and especially the kids at the ballpark. That's the most important part to me, the future belongs to the young kids going to the ballpark and ensuring a strong future for Sea Dogs baseball.

I urge this committee to vote ought to pass on this legislation. I believe the State's investment can make a big difference in ensuring the Sea Dogs play ball in Portland for many years to come.