



March 13, 2024

Dear Sen. Grohoski, Rep. Perry, and members of the joint standing committee on taxation,

We are writing to you today to provide testimony in support of LD 2258.

Every year since 1995, Maine Children's Cancer Program (MCCP) - the oncology and hematology program of The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital (BBCH) at Maine Medical Center - has partnered with the Portland Sea Dogs to embark on a season-long fundraising program known as Strike Out Cancer in Kids (SOCK). In its 30 years, SOCK has raised a remarkable **\$5.25 million** to support the patients and families at MCCP throughout their entire journey with childhood cancer. What makes this program extra special: each year, a patient is honored as a Slugger Kid, acting as an ambassador for the baseball season and enjoying a summer of fame, all while bravely fighting cancer. As if that was not enough, for the past 21 years, the Portland Sea Dogs has also organized the Slugger Open golf tournament, raising substantial funds to enhance patient care at Maine's only full-service children's hospital.

The Portland Sea Dogs' longstanding culture and commitment to saying "yes" to its community partners has made possible hundreds of instances when we've worked together to create cherished memories and much-needed respite for patients and their families while battling a diagnosis that no child or family should have to face. For instance, when Slugger creates a video for a critically ill child who is having a tough day, when the Sea Dogs donate tickets to a family who needs time away from the hospital, or when they help us amplify our own fundraising efforts by sharing our social media posts with their larger number of followers. When we ask the Portland Sea Dogs for help, the answer invariably is "yes".

A hospital can be a lonely place. At every home game, the Sea Dogs announcer asks fans to wave up to the children on the BBCH inpatient unit - this simple yet deeply meaningful act serves as a regular reminder to our patients, families, and staff that the community has them in their hearts and minds.

Like many non-profits in Maine, when we think "community partner", we think of the Portland Sea Dogs.

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Parks
Director of Philanthropy
Maine Children's Cancer Program
The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital
Maine Medical Center

Jason Hanley
Board President
Maine Children's Cancer Program