

Michael Bourque  
Portland  
LD 2258

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Michael Bourque. I am a resident of Portland. I am the President and CEO of MEMIC and most importantly for this hearing a Portland Sea Dogs fan. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 2258.

As is the case with life, and career development for that matter, you never know where your experiences will take you. Our interests and pursuits take us from one place to another and eventually you find yourself in a place you never thought you'd be. I'm no stranger to that experience. If you would have told me nearly three decades ago that I would be the President of an insurance company, I wouldn't have believed you. After graduating from the University of Maine with a degree in Journalism I found myself in Alaska writing about hockey. I wanted to be a sportswriter and I was fortunate to find someone that would pay me to do just that. It was a great job.

In fact, as you will learn in today's public hearing, minor league sports provide the foundation for many professional careers - not just those in sports.

While my ambitions of being a sportswriter adapted long ago, I remain a sports fan. To that end, I want to share my belief that Maine is fortunate to have the Portland Sea Dogs as part of our business, cultural, and entertainment landscape. The club demonstrates the goodness of a community and the best of what a small city like Portland has to offer. The team is a fabulous social and economic amenity that contributes to making Greater Portland an attractive place to work, live, and raise a family - as I have. The economic benefits are significant, and not to mention, it's family friendly and affordable entertainment all summer long for people all over Maine, and for our summer visitors. (I can't tell you how many times over the years I have seen my Aroostook County friends at a game!)

On a personal note my family has had wonderful direct contact with the club in ways that have shaped our family dynamic. Many kids in Portland can point to their first job being right at Hadlock field. Three of our four kids got their first job in concessions. It was a great experience for them. (And who wouldn't want to go to work at the ballpark?) We've also hosted a player and his wife as a host family a few summers ago. It was a wonderful social connection that continues to be part of our family story even today.

My testimony today I'm sure will be repeated many times as you hear from others. The Sea Dogs are a fantastic corporate citizen in our state. If passing this bill will enable them to stay in Maine for the long haul, I would urge you to vote in favor of the bill. The social, economic, and cultural good the team provides is unmatched. I would ask that this committee vote ought to pass on this bill. Maine needs the Portland Sea Dogs.