



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936**

60 Community Drive | Augusta, ME 04330-9486

1-800-452-8786 (in state)
(T) 207-623-8428
(F) 207-624-0129

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither for Nor Against

LD 123- An Act Regarding Licensure of Emergency Medical Service Persons

January 28, 2024

Sen. Bailey, Rep. Matheson and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting placed holder testimony on behalf of Maine Municipal Association for LD 123, *An Act Regarding Licensure of Emergency Medical Service Persons*. The positions the association provides are at the direction of our 70 member Legislative Police Committee (LPC) who have not had the opportunity to vet the potential impacts of this bill, but are meeting this Thursday, January 30, to develop their official position. If the committee has held a work session on the bill prior to the development of MMA's official position, I will submit additional testimony following this meeting.

As the committee reviews the potential impacts of a seemingly small language change, it may be worth understanding that in many areas of the state, municipal ambulance services have been challenged to find training for community members who desire to serve their ambulance service, often in a part time capacity. In rural communities, the part-time model for staffing is crucial to guarantee an ambulance response when the calls for service regionally are far below a sustainable level for full time staffing. Some communities have even rented apartments to provide per diem employees an opportunity to serve far away from their home and protect a 5 minute response time model while also providing experience for new emergency medical technicians often necessary to work for a larger community.

During regional meetings held with MMA this fall, northern communities shared their challenges with accessing EMT training, due to a lack of qualified instruction during appropriate hours and distances to their municipalities. Despite having ample volunteers who desired to receive the training and serve, and satellite community college and University spaces, these communities were instead challenged by training offerings that were only held during the day, and over an hour away, excluding access for individuals who held other jobs in the community to become certified. If the language change proposed by the department in LD 123 from "practical exam" to "assessment" further makes certification training harder to access or deliver, this will not be a change our most vulnerable rural communities will welcome.

Conversely, if the language change enables the EMS Board to broaden the ways individuals can meet certification requirements in the field with experienced staff, the change will likely be welcomed. I will submit the official position of the Association following our LPC deliberation on the language Thursday. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration and service to Maine's communities.