

Esteemed Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is Brent Libby, I work in municipal Fire – EMS. I have been a licensed EMT since 1998, Paramedic since 2003 and a service chief since 2004. I have served as an appointed member of the Maine EMS Board since 2018, having served as Chair of the Board from 2021-2023.

I am writing to emphatically oppose LD 245 An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State.

I will be using the numbered summary as a basis for my comments below:

Item 1 - This creates a 26-person permanent commission. The EMS systems make up already has 68 distinct voluntary positions between the Maine EMS Board, sub committees, medical directions and practices board, regional councils and medical directors. During the Blue-Ribbon Commission process it was noted that the Maine EMS board of 18 was unwieldy, could be challenged by quorum and continually struggled to ensure all of the specific positions were filled. This commission will be no different and is substantially larger. The Maine EMS System does not need more bureaucracy.

Item 2 – Municipal officers can already do this. Further, when we tried to establish EMS as an essential service and assign the responsibility to local or even county government, we as a state couldn't agree on where it should live so we simply called it essential. That clearly didn't work.

Item 3 – The EMS Act of 1982 does not need to be amended to allow EMS personnel the ability to work in a hospital or health care facility. This can already be done. As discussed by the Director of Licensing at DHHS this essentially creates a dangerous loophole with only finger pointing for enforcement or accountability when something goes wrong.

Item 4- The Bureau of EMS is already doing this using the funds for community self-determination. That first round of grants are ready to be issued. This will allow for feedback on general costs, outcomes and final reports for those geographic areas that are participating.

Item 5 – The Board of EMS has already initiated changes based on the Maine EMS: Two – year action plan and we continue to work on this. The key is to ensure that nothing is left behind and that the changes will ensure success and stability in the future.

Item 6 – This project would have a positive outcome on EMS. The key question is who is going to it. The Bureau of Maine EMS is dangerously understaffed with three quarters of its current staff being grant funded. Until last budget when the legislature approved four regional managers the EMS Bureau had not received a new budgeted staff member in 15 years. In comparison the Fire Marshal's Office has as many state funded positions in one region of three in the state compared to the entire EMS Bureau.

In closing, the EMS system does not need more committees. We do need a bureau office that is adequately funded and staffed. We need a clear delineation and responsible entity for the provision of essential EMS services for the state, just as we do for fire control.

Thank you for your time and commitment to making the EMS system better in our state, please be cautious to not further bog down and burden the system in politics.

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