

To: Senator Pinny Beebe-Center and Representative Tavis Hasenfus Chairs, and Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

Re: Testimony about LD 841 to Study the Delivery of Emergency Medical Services and Ferry Service Effects on 27 island communities in the State

My name is Martin Phillips. I am a retired physician, and have been spending about 5 months of the summer on Islesboro, a large island in Penobscot Bay for about 15 years. We have a terrific community there, and we have deep friendships with both seasonal and year-round residents from all walks of life.

At the end of 2021 the Emergency Medical Service on the island needed more Emergency Medical Technicians. I thought that after having a career in medicine which included some work in emergency rooms, getting an EMT license would be easy, and I could basically walk on to the ambulance.

Well, I discovered that it wasn't that easy. I studied hard, taking a lot of time, to learn the many techniques and skills that an EMT needs that are very different from the practice of medicine in a hospital.

I have taken as many shifts as my schedule allows, mostly weekends and a few nights. It is incredibly rewarding, because as an EMT you are dropped into someone else's life at one of their lowest moments, and you do everything in your power to help them and get them to definitive care. I have helped a mother whose baby stopped breathing, people having heart attacks and strokes, people in pain, with broken bones, and an older man with dementia who could no longer be safe alone in his house.

These events don't happen 9 to 5 or on anyone's schedule. That is the topic of our request today. When we are transporting a critical patient, the ferry has been a godsend. We drive the ambulance on to the ferry, and continue caring for the patient without interruption, just like we are on the highway. The crews and captains are heroes.

We have a protocol so that we only call for the ferry when it is needed. If a patient is stable enough, we take them by private boat and meet an ambulance at the Lincolnville Ferry dock. If they are critical, we call Life Flight, if they can fly. But for unstable patients, seamless access to the ferry at night is lifesaving.

I have great respect for our Service Chief, Fred Porter who runs a very professional organization, for my colleagues on the truck, and the Health Center team who pitch in. Maintaining a first-class EMS to serve the people on a remote island needs the close coordination of many moving pieces.

I strongly request that we continue to dock the ferry on Islesboro overnight, and urge this Committee to vote "Ought to pass." Thank you.