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My first trip on a Maine State ferry was in 1959, and ever since then, my family has used the ferry (Islesboro-Lincolnville). If not for the ferry and crew being available quickly, I would have perhaps watched my father die after his pacemaker went off three times in a row. Instead, he was rushed by ambulance to the ferry, taken across the bay, and taken to a mainland hospital. Islesboro ferry crews are limited by the size of the island as to where they live, whereas no such limitation exists for ferry service workers living on the mainland. Furthermore, an extra 25 minutes for crossing the bay is a crucial amount of time for heart issues. My father ended up in hospice and died a calm death instead of waiting in an ambulance for a ferry crew.

While someone might want to argue that my father chose to live on Islesboro, the same argument does not work for my daughter, son-in-law, and newborn child. My only grandchild needs expert medical treatment, treatment well beyond the capacity of the Islesboro Health Center. In case of an emergency for my grandson, an extra 25 minutes or longer can be devastating. My daughter and son-in-law did not choose this path, but they are loving and careful parents; it cannot be the role of the State of Maine to determine on the basis of cost who deserves expert medical care.

A few months ago, when the DOT first signaled its intent to moor the Islesboro ferry at the Lincolnville terminal, one argument that I heard is that there are only a few thousand people on the islands but the entire population of Maine does not receive such services. Counting people is not the point of safe and timely transportation. The point of safe and timely transportation is a matter of life and death.