

Stephanie Chambers
Addison
LD 2069

Thank you for taking a moment to read my statement in favor of passing the LD2069 Bill.

On January 18, 2025 our family's world as we knew it was changed forever. F/V Sudden Impact with Chet and Aaron Barrett on board was lost at sea. My sister, Melanie Barrett, lost Chet, her lifetime best friend and husband and Aaron, her only child; her son, her world was in that f/v.

The father and son crew were moving their f/v and gear during scallop season. They had plans to be back at their homeport in South Addison well ahead of an impending storm system coming in overnight. When they became unreachable by radio, cell phone and were overdue at port; panic and chaos ensued.

The next fifteen days were a blur yet every detail etched in our minds forever. Chet Barrett was recovered on February 2, 2025 however Aaron Barrett has not been recovered and his final resting place is at sea. Those days and events prompted the proposal and passing of the LD1708 Bill, thanks to Representative Tiffany Strout. Many of the residents in Maine either work on the water or have a family member dependent upon the sea for income: lobster fishing, shellfish diggers, scallop dragging, etc. The additional businesses in Maine that depend upon the fishermen for their work; such as boat builders, supply stores, trap makers, bait suppliers, etc. all support Maine economically. Each of these people are impacted by our fishermen; our fishermen who risk their lives from their first step off the dock until they have both feet back on land.

In 2025, Washington County, Maine lost 4 fishermen. Chet Barrett; fishermen, husband, father, son, brother, uncle, friend to many. Aaron Barrett; fishermen, son, significant other, step-dad, nephew, cousin, friend to many. Jaxson Marston; fishermen, significant other, dad, son, grandson, uncle, friend to many. Alton Wallace; fishermen, husband, dad, son, brother, friend to many. Each of these men have a "story" and they deserve to be remembered for the life they lived, not just the tragedy that took their lives. On July 21, 2025 we attended the Fishermen's Remembrance Day in Lubec presented by Green Hope, Liz Michaud. We were in the early stages of grieving and had been advocating for Chet and Aaron Barretts' name to be engraved on the Lost Fishermen's Monument. The event was another step forward in the grieving process, we attended with the 3 other families that had lost their beloved fishermen in 2025. Additionally, we were able to meet the family of Tyler Michaud who was a young man lost to the sea in 2023. It was a day of reflection; a time of unity for our community. A day when we were all together, supporting one another, giving encouragement and sharing stories and tears. A day when complete strangers became lifelong friends. Living in a fishing community we need this remberance day; a dedicated day to stand side by side and reflect on our fishermen's life. In a generation of electronics, we need to teach our children, grandchildren and all the young fishing families that human contact and support is available when grieving.

The loss of a fishermen has a ripple effect from the family, friends, fellow fishermen, throughout our small quaint towns, overflowing into the county and quickly spreading throughout Maine and from there out into the world.

Speaking from the family perspective of 2 lost fishermen, the importance of a day dedicated to remembering our loved ones will let each of us know we are not alone. We will be acknowledging the daily risks of a fishermen and will be teaching the upcoming generations of fishermen that the State of Maine supports and respects their career choice.

Please consider passing the LD2069 Bill; our lost fishermen deserve this recognition, these fishermen's spouses, children, grandchildren, extended family and friends deserve recognition for a life lost too soon to the sea.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.
Stephanie Chambers

