

Ruth van Kampen
Orono
LD 2106

Good morning,

I am writing to submit written testimony to support LD 2106. I am a firefighter/EMT in Penobscot and Waldo Counties and frequently transport members of my community to emergency rooms in Bangor. I am also a paramedic student and frequently work clinical shifts in the ERs in Bangor and on surrounding fire departments. I have also been an employee at these ERs and have also had the privilege to interact with patients from myriad socioeconomic, cultural, and racial backgrounds.

My responsibility to my patients is to provide safe, competent care and to transport them to the hospital of their choosing, if they are able to make that decision. A major issue rural healthcare faces in 2026 is the economic burden of calling an ambulance, going to the ER, and the enormous medical bill for vital, often lifesaving, services rendered. This is not a healthcare hearing, and I will not spend your limited time asking you to read about things you already know.

What you might not know is that an individual calling 911 in rural areas often spends hours, days, and sometimes weeks deliberating on whether to call us for help. Multiple times a week, I ask, "Why didn't you call us sooner?" I know the reason. They know the reason. We absolutely cannot give our rural neighbors and immigrants additional reasons not to seek out the healthcare they need for fear of the violence, bigotry, and detainment we've seen happen since ICE was established in 2003. If you've walked into a hospital elevator recently, you know the signs posted. "This is a place of healing" "Keep your voices down" "Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated." We have seen the results of mobilizing ICE in areas across the United States. Please don't bring that to our hospitals.

Please help healthcare workers continue keeping hospitals and ERs a place of healing, rest, and peace. Please don't contribute to the existing barriers to immigrants and people of color seeking healthcare. Please support LD 2106.

Thank you for your time.

Ruth van Kampen