

**Testimony of Tony Baker  
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989**

**In support of LD 669, An Act Regarding Labor,  
Sponsored by Representative Amy Roeder**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor  
1pm March 3, 2026, Cross Building Room 202 and Electronically**

Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, I'm Tony Baker, a field representative for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. We are a labor union representing over 13,000 Maine workers, including Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) employees.

Prior to becoming a field rep for MSEA, I worked at MaineDOT for nearly 10 years, where I started as a Transportation Worker I and worked my way to a Transportation Crew Leader. I am here to speak on behalf of the employees at MaineDOT for the amendment of Concept Bill LD 669.

You all know about the tragedy in Waterville that claimed the lives of two MaineDOT employees and also injured two others. There were more employees on the jobsite who were not "physically injured," but they will carry the emotional scars for the rest of their lives. This accident and the loss of life have called for an amendment to LD 669 to allow MaineDOT employees to be included into the Line of Duty Benefit.

MaineDOT employees in short are "First Responders." If it was not for the men and women who do these jobs to keep the roads clear of snow, water, hazards, and in repair, public safety would not be able to have the appropriate response in times of need. These men and women spend countless hours and days on end making sure the public can get where they need to go and to keep the state moving.

I personally have had many near-miss incidents; I am lucky to be here today. I have had many vehicles not stop while flagging on the roadway. In one instance in particular, I was fortunate that I was able to dive into the ditch and avoid being hit. I have had to avoid items falling off of passing trucks and I have also been hit by mirrors of vehicles that were driving by because the driver thought it was funny or was not paying attention. What I am getting at is simple: It does not matter the extent of the safety precautions or a perfect work zone setup. These employees are at the mercy of the general public when they are on the road and they put their lives at risk every day when they go to work. The best they can hope for is that the general public is paying attention when passing by, so that way they can go home uninjured at night.

Nothing can be done to bring back the lives that have been lost, but amending LD 669 is one thing to help ease some of the burden on the families involved and, heaven forbid, any future families. The accident that happened has and will always be one of the biggest fears of all MaineDOT employees. It does not matter if you knew the employees or not; it has shaken all MaineDOT employees and the community.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions.