



STATE OF MAINE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SPEAKER'S OFFICE  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1300

RACHEL TALBOT ROSS  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Monday, March 20th, 2023

*Testimony of Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross presenting*  
***LD 526, An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services.***  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety*

Good morning. Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Representative Rachel Talbot Ross of Portland. I have the honor of serving as the Speaker of the House and I am with you today to present and ask for your support of **LD 526, An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services.**

Awakened by smoke and the bleating of the smoke alarm, you and your family make it out of the house safely as fire trucks arrive to put out the flames. But all the smoke exposure from getting everyone out is sitting on your chest. You wait, full of adrenaline and relief, looking for the sirens and desperately needed medical attention...yet no ambulance arrives.

This is the future facing hundreds of rural Maine communities without serious and substantial investments in our emergency medical system. During the summer of 2022, I had the responsibility of serving as a member of the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State. Over six meetings and hours of testimony and deliberations, we reached the inevitable conclusion that the Maine EMS system is in crisis. LD 526 is an emergency effort to stabilize the system so more extensive life saving measures can be advanced.

LD 526 provides \$25M to the Department of Public Safety in the next fiscal year for EMS services in danger of collapse. Using a formula that emphasizes rurality, LD 526 is aimed at the most precarious areas where help can be hours away when it is needed the most. Language available today proposes accountability measures to ensure oversight by the Maine Emergency Medical Services Board. Services will submit reports and undergo audits by the Board.

**District 118:** Portland neighborhoods of Parkside, Bayside, East Bayside, Oakdale and the University of Southern Maine Campus

I welcome discussions with this committee and the sponsors of other legislation about combining our efforts to encompass both transporting and non-transporting emergency medical services. Conversations with Maine EMS and the Office of the Governor are ongoing as well. I would greatly appreciate the forbearance and cooperation of this committee as we continue our efforts.

Put it this way, today you are taking out the defibrillator and ensuring this system gets a chance at a full recovery. Our next steps will require a full care plan and regular maintenance. There is no other option, for too many this is quite literally a life-or-death option. I urge you to vote to support this legislation. I hope that we can all agree that this is an issue that affects all of us and all our constituents, there are no Republicans or Democrats when we are in need.

Behind me today are people who work every day to provide emergency services. I am grateful for their time, their service, and the heroic nature of their work. I am certain they will be happy to provide you with more information today and at the work session. Thank you very much.