



Glenn "Chip" Curry
Senator, District 11

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony of Senator Chip Curry introducing
LD 588, "An Act to Promote Public Safety and Retain Essential First Responders
by Funding the Maine Length of Service Award Program"**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
March 20, 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Senator Chip Curry, and I represent the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County. Today, I am pleased to present LD 588, "An Act to Promote Public Safety and Retain Essential First Responders by Funding the Maine Length of Service Award Program."

This program, commonly referred to as LOSAP, is modeled after numerous other state programs and is designed to reward Maine volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel for service to their communities with contributions to a retirement program. The Maine Fire Services Commission began working on this retention initiative in 2003. Then, the 127th Legislature passed LD 164, establishing LOSAP at the State level. In July 2017, the seven-member governor-appointed board began creating its bylaws and rules.

Since then, funding the initiative has been a disappointing endeavor. In the 129th Legislature, LD 1014 died on the appropriations table when we adjourned early due to the pandemic. LD 1316 from the 130th Legislature fared better, passing to fund the third-party administrator, but AFA stripped out the funding of contributions. I thank this committee and the members who have served here during those sessions for their historically unanimous support of this program. With LD 588, our volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel are once again seeking your support to finally fund this important initiative.

I don't need to tell you that our volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel are critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of Maine residents. In many rural and remote areas of our state, these volunteers are the backbone of our emergency response system. Without their dedication, communities are left vulnerable, and lives are at risk.

Funding LOSAP demonstrates our commitment to recognizing the sacrifices and dedication of these essential workers. These individuals often balance their volunteer work with full-time jobs and family responsibilities, yet remain devoted to serving their communities.



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As the challenges of modern life continue to mount and volunteers make those kitchen table calculations as to whether or not they can continue to serve their communities, LOSAP can help us retain these critical community volunteers. LOSAP provides a small but meaningful financial incentive; but, just as importantly, it communicates our recognition and appreciation of their service.

I request your vote and advocacy in support of LD 588. Thank you for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chip Curry".

Chip Curry
State Senator, District 11
Representing the 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County