



Maine Fire Chiefs' **A S S O C I A T I O N**

Local Government Center 60 Community Drive Augusta, Maine 04330-9486

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am Chief Bill Gillespie from Liberty, Maine and the Legislative Liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association representing more than 400 Fire Chiefs throughout the state.

I am here today to ask for your support of LD 588: An Act to Promote Public Safety and Retain Essential First Responders by Funding the Maine Length of Service Award Program

In April of 2003, the Maine Fire Services Commission commissioned an actuarial study of the need for a Length of Service Award Program for the State of Maine.

In the 127th Legislative Session, LD 164 was passed to establish the Length of Service Award Program at the State level. The program was designed to be a defined contribution plan where participants get contributions to their account on an annual basis. The Legislation approved five different funding sources for the program. However, it went unfunded, and a board was not established.

In 2017 Governor LePage allowed the board of directors to be established and they elected me as their Chair. Since then, we have established and maintained a Board, created By-Laws and outlined the Program.

In the 129th Legislative Session, we submitted our first request for funding. We were unsuccessful in receiving funding but gained a better education of the process.

In the 130th legislature we submitted a 2.5-million-dollar request and were successful in receiving \$500,000.00 to hire a third-party administrator. This has been the groundwork to bringing this important program to Maine's Fire and EMS providers. In the Biannual budget Governor mills contributed 1 million dollars with an additional \$500,000.00 coming from the special appropriations table. The program is built and now in need of a steady flow of revenue only the state can provide.

I ask for your support of this 2.5-million-dollar request to fully fund what we feel is one of the key elements to solving the Recruitment and Retention issue affecting both services. It is time to give back to all who have expected so little from you.

**Respectfully,
Chief Bill Gillespie - Legislative Liaison & LOSAP Chair**