

*131<sup>st</sup> Legislature*  
*Senate of*  
*Maine*  
*Senate District 2*

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**LD 1802, "An Act to Add Certain Volunteer Firefighters  
to the Definition of Volunteer Firefighter"**

**Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety**  
**May 4, 2023**

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

I am Senator Trey Stewart; and I represent District 2, which includes several communities in Aroostook County and Northern Penobscot County. I am here today to present LD 1802, "*An Act to Add Certain Volunteer Firefighters to the Definition of Volunteer Firefighter.*"

This proposal was brought to me by Dan Brooks from the Winthrop Fire Department whose attention was drawn to the fact that Maine's current definition of volunteer firefighter only recognizes a firefighter that is a part of an independent organization and, as such, must receive no compensation. Very few volunteer firefighters in Maine fit into that definition.

It is my understanding there are two types of recognized fire departments: (1) an organized municipal department and (2) an independent volunteer organization that is contracted by and receives money from a community which is then appropriated by the department as it sees fit to best provide fire protection. Furthermore, I am told that approximately 90% of Maine's volunteer fire departments belong to a municipality department and are paid on-call or with a stipend, which does not fall under the Maine statutory definition of volunteer firefighter.

This bill would incorporate the United States Department of Labor definition of volunteer as someone who earns 20% or less of what a full-time counterpart would earn, which would then encompass the majority of Maine's volunteer firefighters.

I believe you will hear testimony following mine that will provide more of an explanation for you. I will, however, attempt to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.