

Testimony in Opposition to LD 1639
An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Rick Petrie, and I am a Paramedic who has worked in the Maine EMS system for 42 years. I am now the Chief Operations Officer for North East Mobile Health, and I am speaking with you today as a representative of the Maine Ambulance Association.

It goes without saying that our healthcare System is in crisis, and Nurses, like every healthcare employee, are overworked and stretched to the breaking point.

However, this bill would be devastating to an EMS system that is already overtaxed and experiencing delays not only when moving patient between hospitals and other healthcare organizations, but also in emergency responses. On a daily basis, hospitals in Maine go on diversion because their emergency departments are overwhelmed with patients, taking ambulances out of the coverage districts and increasing the need for mutual aid responses. This legislation will significantly compound that problem, resulting in ambulance crews waiting in line to bring their patients in to the emergency department, or being requested to move even more patients out of the hospitals. In other parts of the nation, we have EMS crews doing the shift changes at the Hospital because the original transporting crew has been there so long waiting to deliver their patient.

We sympathize with the plight of the nurses and understand the motivation behind this bill. However, the unintended consequences will have a negative impact on patient care, and the healthcare system will be further damaged if this legislation is successful, and we know that was not the intention of the sponsors.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Rick Petrie, EMT-P
rpetrie@nemhs.com
207-754-9109