

Testimony
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
LD 2156 – “An Act to Authorize the Provision of Emergency Medical Treatment for Certain
Dogs”

February 8, 2024

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Health Care, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Colin Ayer and I regrettably am unable to join you in person today. Please accept this written testimony as my support of “An Act to Authorize the Provision of Emergency Medical Treatment for Certain Dogs” (LD 2156). I offer this support as a Licensed Maine Paramedic, the Paramedic Representative to the Maine EMS Medical Direction and Practices Board, an instructor of Advanced First Aid for Operational K9s, and as a former tactical team paramedic.

My entire adult life (19-year career thus far) has been spent providing emergency care to members of the public, and other members of public safety, in their time of need. Several years ago, a group my colleagues began the work necessary to allow us to care for our working dogs in their time of need in the State of Maine. This was accomplished by first passing legislation, and then delivering statewide EMS protocols for providers to follow when treating these important, but sometimes overlooked, members of our public safety team. These dogs work tirelessly to protect our communities in many different capacities, and we owe it to them to allow pre-hospital providers to care for them both pre and post incident should the need arise.

It is essential as EMS clinicians that we have protocols that establish the guidelines of how care is provided in different emergency situations. This is how we have treated our human patients for years, and it is only logical that we treat our Operational K9s in the same manner. Being the first state in the nation to have statewide protocols on this topic is something we should all be immensely proud of. This amended legislation is the final step to make this entire process a full reality.

Since becoming involved with the treatment of Operational K9s (both as a provider and as an instructor), I have seen, or been part of, been multiple instances where this training has led to a positive outcome for an injured, or ill, K9. In some instances, the handlers themselves were empowered to care for their partners at the point of injury more completely because of the training and networking with EMS providers that this amended legislation would help foster. Keeping these dogs healthy and on the street has a direct impact on the safety of our communities and our State as a whole.

In closing, communities and agencies invest a tremendous amount of time, effort, and money to train and keep these dogs working. It is essential that this goes a step further to allow better care outside of the traditional clinical environment should the need arise. Therefore, I ask you to find LD 2156 Ought to Pass with Amendment.

Thank you for your consideration and thought I cannot be there in person; I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have regarding my personal experiences with training providers or providing care to working dogs. My contact information is provided below.

Respectfully Submitted,

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