

Amanda Bisol, VMD

To Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Amanda Bisol, and I have been living and working as a small animal veterinarian in Skowhegan since 2011. I have also been a part-time law student at the University of Maine School of Law since 2019.

I am testifying in support of LD 2156, An Act to Authorize the Provision of Emergency Medical Treatment for Certain Dogs with amendments.

I want to start by saying that I have spoken with many individuals to try and best determine a direction for the wording of this bill. This includes speaking with the American Veterinary Medical Association, our national organization, speaking with members of the Maine veterinary community, and speaking with the other proponents of the bill from the human medical community.

I recognize that I have learned quite a bit, particularly with the discussions with the human emergency medical response side, and understand that they need to operate via specific protocols in the field. I have seen the protocols currently developed, and agree that these would potentially enter into the practice of veterinary medicine and therefore not be protected within the current Civil Immunities law that was passed in 2018 (14 MRSA § 164-B).

The difficulty I have as a veterinarian with this current proposal, as compared to the Civil Immunities law which is very detailed and thorough, is that LD 2156 is extremely vague, very brief, and ambiguous.

Over the past week and a half I have worked on multiple potential amendments, and yet seem not fully satisfied with any of them. I have included my final proposal for you to consider at the end of this printed testimony.

Ideally, veterinarians would prefer that this can be done, and these protocols adopted and implemented by emergency medical personnel WITHOUT the second amendment to this bill, Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §4860, sub-§13, which amends our practice act for an additional exception. There are many factors that make this particular part of LD 2156 complicated, and I do not have time to list them here.

I do feel there are ways within the current law, that with the first part of LD 2156, will allow these emergency medical personnel to follow these protocols without needing to amend our practice act. Further testimony from others will highlight some of these aspects.

I am thankful for all of the continued work the Medical Direction and Practices Board has done to try and both align with the needs of emergency medical responders in the state of Maine, the

potential needs of law enforcement dogs working in the field, and including veterinarians in this process.

I welcome your efforts to continue this debate and determine the best language to meet the two primary concerns we have with the current language:

- 1) "Certain dogs" defined specifically to law enforcement dogs and search and rescue dogs
- 2) A Maine licensed veterinarian is mandated to be included with the development and implementation of the protocols, including in training.

My suggested amendment is likely sufficient to meet (1), and both other veterinarians and the Medical Direction and Practices Board have some suggestions to consider for (2).

To reiterate, if it is possible to meet these needs without amending the Maine Veterinary Practice Act, that would be much preferable. With the evolution of telemedicine, this is likely possible.

Thank you for your time today and I welcome any questions or clarification, and would be happy to participate in the work session.

Sincerely,

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Suggested amendments:

LD 2156

An Act to Authorize the Provision of Emergency Medical Treatment for Certain Dogs

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §85, sub-§9** is enacted to read:

3 **9. Dogs.** An emergency medical services person licensed under this chapter may
4 provide emergency medical treatment to certain dogs as defined in 14 MRSA § 164-B, sub-§1(B)
5 and (D) in accordance with protocols adopted
by the Medical Direction and Practices Board as defined in section 83, subsection 12 with a
Maine licensed veterinarian member.

6 **Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §4860, sub-§13** is enacted to read:

7 **13. Emergency medical services person.** An emergency medical services person as
8 defined in section 83, subsection 12 ~~practicing providing emergency medical treatment to certain~~
dogs as defined in 14 MRSA § 164-B, sub-§1(B) and (D) in accordance with protocols adopted
by the
9 Medical Direction and Practices Board as defined in section 83, subsection 16-B with a Maine
licensed veterinarian member.