

Written Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 2156

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Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and members of the committee I thank you for your time and consideration. My name is Janelle Tirrell. I am an equine veterinarian, and have been practicing in the state of Maine for nearly eighteen years. I am currently the Chair of the Maine Veterinary Medical Association's Legislative Committee.

I am here today to discuss LD 2156, An Act to Authorize the Provision of Emergency Medical Treatment for Certain Dogs. I applaud Representative Fay and the legislature for taking the time and effort to ensure that our non-human first responders are afforded the care they earn every day that they work on our behalf. The animals of law enforcement deserve no less than our best efforts.

I would like to respectfully suggest some changes that will simplify the bill, and prevent unintended consequences or gaps in care down the line.

1. I strongly suggest that the "certain dogs" definition be changed to read "law enforcement dogs"
2. The practices and procedures of Emergency Medical Personnel are formulated by the Medical Direction and Practices Board. I suggest a veterinarian, preferably one specializing in emergency medicine, be made a permanent member of the board to provide critical input and guidance in the formulation of procedures and protocols for animals. This is important for the safety of the medical personnel as well as for the health of the animal.
3. I urge the committee to consider removing Section 2 from the bill. Emergency care should be governed by the Emergency Medical Services Board, and should not be incorporated into the Maine Veterinary Practice Act. This would mirror the way in which Emergency Medical Services and human medicine work together.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today, and I look forward to the good work this committee sets out to do on behalf of the first responder animals of the state of Maine. Thank you.