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Testimony in Support of:

L.D. 58, "An Act to Establish Certain Positions Within the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services"
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. I'm David Richmond, Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services and I'm here today to testify in support of L.D. 58, "An Act to Establish Certain Positions Within the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services".

The Bureau is committed to providing the highest level of service to Maine's veteran population and ensuring that the men and women who have served our nation receive the resources, support, and opportunities they have earned. In recent years, the Bureau has expanded to ensure that the right people are in place across the state to carry out this mission.

Three of these relatively new positions are Deputy roles that support key leadership positions within the organization: Director, Supervisor of Veterans Services, and Superintendent of the Veterans' Cemetery System. These three leadership positions, along with all Bureau Veterans' Services Officers, must meet the federal definition of "veteran." Additionally, they must have been honorably discharged from the branch of service in which they served.

This legislation proposes adding the same "veteran" requirement to the three Deputy positions. This change ensures that a Deputy can learn and grow in their position and be fully qualified for promotion to a role with greater responsibility within the Bureau. It also includes housekeeping language changes to certain position titles to better align with current human resources job descriptions.

Veterans bring unique skills, experiences, and perspectives to their work at the Bureau. They have firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by Maine's veteran community and are uniquely positioned to provide empathetic and effective assistance. As we continue to address critical issues such as mental health, housing insecurity, and employment for veterans and their families, it is essential that we maintain a workforce that is deeply connected to the communities we serve.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Richmond
Director, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services