



Rachel Talbot Ross
Senator, District 28

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Rachel Talbot Ross introducing
**LD 245, “An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon
Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State”**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
February 10, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

I am Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, and I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of Portland and Peaks Island. I also had the privilege of co-chairing the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State.

Through the 130th and 131st Legislatures, the commission took a hard look at the challenges facing emergency medical services in Maine. We spoke with providers, municipal officials, and emergency responders. What we found was clear: EMS in Maine is in crisis, and without immediate action, more communities will be left without reliable emergency care.

This bill puts the commission’s recommendations into action. Key among these recommendations, the bill would establish a permanent EMS Commission to provide oversight and ensure the system remains strong.

The bill would also give municipalities the ability to develop EMS plans that work for their communities while ensuring there’s a structure in place to track and evaluate services statewide. I would ask the committee to consider changing the language from “may adopt” to “shall adopt” and post.

Additionally, it directs a full funding analysis to understand what resources are needed to keep EMS services running, particularly in rural areas. It also calls for a reorganization of Maine EMS to ensure it is structured to meet the needs of today’s system.

Finally, it includes a public awareness campaign to better educate the public on what resources are available to them and how to access them, as well as help recruit and retain EMS providers because none of these reforms will matter if we don’t have the workforce to sustain them.

When the commission met, we heard directly from EMTs, paramedics, and fire chiefs who are watching their services collapse under financial strain. We heard from small towns struggling to secure even basic emergency coverage. This isn’t a problem for the future — it is happening right now. Every Mainer should be able to trust that if they call 911, an ambulance will be there.



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But for too many communities, that is no longer a guarantee. This isn't theoretical anymore — we have already seen real tragedies in our state, with people losing their lives because help was too far away.

The recommendations in this bill come directly from those working on the front lines. We have a clear path forward. What we need now is the commitment to act. I urge you to support this bill so we can begin making the changes that EMS providers, our communities, and the citizens we represent desperately need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Talbot Ross".

Rachel Talbot Ross
State Senator, District 28
Representing part of Portland and Peaks Island