



Maine Community College System

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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TO: Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations

RE: Testimony neither for nor against, LD 722, *An Act to Fund an Administrative Structure of an Emergency Medical Services Education Program in the Community College System*

DATE: March 17, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations for the Maine Community College System and I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 722 *An Act to Fund an Administrative Structure of an Emergency Medical Services Education Program in the Community College System*. I would like to start by saying that I appreciate Representative Salisbury's commitment to both Maine EMS and to the Maine Community College System. Our position of "Neither For Nor Against" is not because we believe that the funds dedicated to us for our EMS programs are not needed—they are—it is only because, as you well know, we have discussed our priorities with this committee numerous times. Our priorities are an increase to our general operating budget along with ongoing funding for the Maine Free College program and funds that benefit our campuses and students no matter their course of study.

Because your committee has not discussed our EMS program before, I would like to give you a bit of information. The Maine Community College System has educated emergency responders for decades and trains a significant number of new responders annually. Our training centers have been critical partners to the EMS system in Maine. In response to the increased need for emergency responders exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, in 2021 we created an *EMS One Model* led by the four colleges that offered EMS education programs in 2020, EMCC, KVCC, NMCC, and SMCC. The overarching goal of this project was to work collaboratively to stabilize the existing programs, to expand EMS education by adding new programs at YCCC and WCCC and additional capacity at the other colleges; and to build a support network across the state to ensure the ongoing viability of EMS education, especially in rural areas. This

collaboration standardized program structure and has enabled the colleges to align and share curriculum, develop a new curriculum for EMT and Advanced EMT, share instructors and provide joint instructor training and update Training Center Standards, and implement Psychomotor portfolio testing across all programs. The demand for EMS education statewide has never been higher, and this collaborative approach has been critical in our efforts to help meet those demands, especially in rural areas, and provide equitable access across the state. Six of our colleges and our Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce now offer some level of EMS training. Our colleges support high school programs at the CTEs to build a career pathway and engage potential responders early in their education. We train hundreds of Mainers annually so they can become EMTs or increase their skills and become Advanced EMTs or Paramedics. We use funds from MJRP and the Harold Alfond Center to partner with private EMS providers, municipalities and others to train hundreds more without cost to the student and either no cost or minimal cost to our municipalities.

The MCCS and the EMS programs at the colleges are committed to build from this foundation and further improve education and support the needs of the EMS system across the state. We are actively developing a plan to further stabilize and improve the delivery of EMS education statewide but that plan is still under development and a cost estimate yet to be determined. We appreciate Representative Salisbury's support for EMS education and the MCCS and hope that we can partner in the future to implement this plan.