

Testimony of William O'Neal

Director, Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS)

Department of Public Safety

IN OPPOSITION of LD 969

"An Act to Increase Emergency Medical Services Provider Training Opportunities"

Presented by Representative Golek of Harpswell

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Public Hearing: Tuesday, March 24, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the joint standing committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

My name is Wil O'Neal, and I am the Director of Maine Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS)

I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Department of Public Safety and Maine EMS **IN OPPOSITION** of LD 969. "An Act to Increase Emergency Medical Services Provider Training Opportunities"

Our opposition is about keeping the citizens of, and visitors to, the State of Maine safe.

The Maine EMS Board previously adopted rules and training center standards to facilitate off-site trainings, such as the delivery of education at a Maine-licensed Ambulance Service; partially found under Maine EMS's Rules, Ch 8 § 1 (1) – *"Training courses must be conducted in accordance with the Board-approved Training Center Standards; §1(A) Any course (not including continuing education hour programs) leading to certification for EMS provider licensure must be supervised by an instructor/coordinator licensed by Maine EMS for that particular level and must be approved by a Maine EMS Training Center. Out-of-state courses and certifications will be judged on a case-by-case basis using a comparison of Maine EMS approved curricula."*

For us to ensure a new EMS clinician is prepared to safely care for the citizens and visitors to the State of Maine regardless of the hour or circumstances, we need instructors that are supported and vetted; these Instructors must go through an affiliation process with one of our established EMS Training Centers. Licensure classes for EMS professionals must be consistent with the highest standards for patient safety and clinical practice. These are not simple, one-time lessons; this education is a foundation on which a student will build their career in our profession. This training may encompass emergency airway placement, medication administration, or other advanced prehospital care skills. Maine EMS, the Maine EMS Board and the established Training Centers have a duty and obligation to be sure any instructor who provides education for these training courses is appropriately skilled, qualified, and accountable to the institution they serve.

Maine EMS and the EMS Board have positioned funding under the recently opened Sustainability Phase of the Stabilization and Sustainability Grant to support and expand the workforce and training pipeline across our EMS Training Centers. There is a focused push for more hybrid offerings, more offerings overall, additional EMS leadership courses and more as we work to build a sustainable future for EMS training in Maine.

I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

Wil O'Neal

Director, Office of Maine Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS)