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Testimony of Representative Suzanne Salisbury presenting
**LD 882, An Act to Protect Communication with Providers of
Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and esteemed colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am Sue Salisbury and I represent House District 128, which includes part of Westbrook. I am here today to present LD 882, An Act to Protect Communication with Providers of Critical Incident Stress Management Peer Support.

In Maine statute, a “critical incident” is a work-related incident that causes or has the potential to cause an employee, member of a public safety agency or organization involved in emergency care to experience emotional or physical stress. “Critical incidents” include, but are not limited to, use-of-force encounters that may result in the death of or serious injury to another person or an officer, member or employee, fatal motor vehicle accidents, child abuse investigations, emergency care or response operations and death investigations. If you have been around police officers, fire fighters or EMS providers, you know that this list is not exhaustive and does not account for the cumulative effects that working in these fields can have on a person.

The addition of critical incident stress debriefing management teams has become a literal life-saving measure for these providers. The ability to sit with colleagues and talk about an incident allows for the acknowledgment that, first and foremost, something very stressful has happened. This can start the process of healing and navigating what will be a difficult few weeks, months or maybe years.

Joe Kellner, the CEO of Life Flight of Maine, brought me this bill. His concern was about confidentiality during debriefing sessions and the potential impact that it could have on this vital process. Joe and I have worked together on several EMS-related bills, and I quickly realized how important it was for us to address this. I have since met with Major Tyler Stevenson from the Maine State Police and Sergeant Ryan Close from the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office to make

sure that the critical incident stress debriefing management teams that work with law enforcement are covered by this change as well.

I am proud to bring this bill to this committee, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have but I know there are others here today that can speak more directly to the issue at hand.

Thank you for your time and consideration.