

Good morning, Senators, Representatives and Committee members.

My name is Jeremiah Jordan and I am an Assistant Fire Chief at the Maine Air National Guard Fire Department in Bangor. I am here on my personal timer to speak in support of LD 1236 An Act to Address Employee Retention of State Employees Who Are Firefighters at Bangor International Airport.

I was hired as a full-time firefighter at the airport in 2003. Our primary mission was initially to provide fire protection to civilian and Military aircraft on the airfield. We also had a structural firefighting commitment to the Air National Guard Base. Additionally, we provided water re-supply to the neighboring communities.

In 2015 we were provided a structural fire engine and our call volume doubled with mutual aid responses to Bangor, Hermon, Old Town and other surrounding towns. In 2024 we had 436 responses. Of these, 121 were medical and vehicle accidents, 80 Aircraft and fuel spill responses and 26 building fires.

At the airport we utilize water, dry chemical, dry powder suppression and firefighting foams to fight aircraft fires. We have replaced AFFF firefighting foams twice to reduce the risk to personnel and the environment. Many of our personnel have had direct exposure to AFFF in maintenance, training and emergencies. Our medical providers screen for PFOS and PFOA blood results annually. Many of our personnel have elevated levels.

Firefighters everywhere are at a higher risk of heart attacks and sudden cardiac arrest from heavy physical exertion. Many firefighters suffer other health effects of sleep deprivation, due to 24/7 emergency calls. We work rotating 24 hour shifts that average 56 hours per week. Many of the neighboring full-time fire departments are working 42-hour work weeks and offering 25-year retirements at any age. Of the last 30 retirements from our Fire Department, 9 were disability retirements.

We are asking for legislation to allow State employees who are Firefighters at Bangor International Airport to retire after 25 years of service without penalty. All expenses for salary, benefits and equipment are 100% Federally funded with zero expense to the State of Maine. To hire firefighters, we must have similar retirement plans with area Fire Departments. To continue to provide high-quality fire protection to the Maine Air National Guard and the Bangor International Airport we ask that you support DVEM Firefighters at Bangor International Airport by passing LD 1236. Thank you.