

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the committee. My name is Dave Coughlan and I am here today to testify in support of LD507.

I am proud to say that I am a lifelong Mainer. My wife and I live in Yarmouth and we spend a lot of time in Bethel as we are avid skiers. In February of 2009 I skied all day at Sunday River on Saturday of Presidents Day weekend. I remember complaining of an earache before my ski day had finished and also that evening. I have no recollection of falling that day but as the next morning came a fever and nausea developed and my wife was unable to get me to respond to any questions. My condition was rapidly deteriorating and before the ambulance arrived I had slipped into a coma. The EMTs decided to transport me to Bethel Regional Airport and LifeFlight was enroute. I was flown to CMMC in Lewiston in 15 minutes. There the medical team discovered a hairline fracture at the base of my skull behind my right ear. After multiple rounds of tests, I was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis and steady doses of antibiotics were administered.

I remained in a coma for 5 days with no clear prognosis or time frame for recovery as my family and friends hoped and prayed for the best. In my 5th day in ICU I awoke from the coma and began my comeback. Overall I spent 2 weeks in the hospital on the antibiotics and once the meningitis had been eliminated I was released to go home to continue with rehab and adjust to everyday life. I was so fortunate to emerge from this event with no physical drawbacks and I have continued to ski and bike with no restrictions. I am forever grateful to LifeFlight for saving my life since time was critical in my care.

In the 16 years since my accident I have met the LifeFlight team that was involved in my transport, many of the supporting staff, and been fortunate to be up close to the helicopters and learn more about them. In 2021 when the third helicopter was added to the fleet I learned that it had new advanced medical equipment that was not yet even invented when I flew in 2009. As I often see or hear the LifeFlight helicopter in the air it always gets me thinking of that patient and the network of people involved from local emergency crews to EMT's and flight nurses, pilots, and communications personnel in touch with hospitals to make all this work. I hope to see LD507 pass and assure that all parts of Maine be accessible for life saving care.

Thank you,

Dave Coughlan