

Testimony for LD 1502

My name is Paul Lewandowski, and I am a prostate cancer survivor. I was born in Lewiston with French Canadian roots and now live in Portland. I'm an architect and small business owner.

I didn't want prostate cancer to define who I am, but instead it opened my eyes to advocacy and paying it forward.

My journey started with a random PSA test in my mid 40's. It was elevated. And for 8 years I watched my PSA rise while biopsies and MRI's couldn't find cancer, until they did. In December of 2019, I underwent a radical prostatectomy in March of 2020 as Covid began to spread.

I was lucky, I got a seemingly simple blood test, The PSA test, early. I liken the PSA test to the check engine light on your car. If it lights up, you don't panic, but you need to pay attention. I paid attention, my treatment was successful and I have been undetectable for prostate cancer for 5 years! A milestone.

- 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. I was the 1 of my 8. I found advocacy as my response.
- I'm an advocate with ZERO cancer, a national organization dedicated to Prostate Cancer awareness.
- I've been to Capitol Hill to meet with Senator Collins and King and representatives Pingree and Golden to ask for support for Prostate Cancer care and research.
- I'm a mentor to newly diagnosed men. I speak with them and answer many questions they are afraid to ask. I offer support, not as a doctor, because I am not one, but as a friend. That process helps me as well.
- I am a peer reviewer for the Prostate Cancer Research Program of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs administered through the US Department of Defense. I offer the perspective of someone who has Prostate Cancer to remind scientists and researchers that the anxiety and fear men have around PC is real. That process has also exposed me to the amazing research that is being conducted.
- Through my advocacy for LD1502 and meeting with Representative Moonen, I've also become involved with The Maine Coalition to Fight Prostate Cancer founded by Nelson Leavitt and others.

I'm here to represent all the men who have died from Prostate Cancer, who are experiencing Prostate Cancer, and who will be diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. Early detection saves lives. This bill will save lives, it will reduce costs in the long run by reducing treatments.

Men with Insurance coverage can get this blood test and other treatments to detect cancer, but with a Co-Pay. For some men, that co-pay is a financial barrier, and for others it is a nuisance and reason to not get the test. Prostate Cancer often does not have any symptoms.

Prostate Cancer changes lives. It takes many too early. This bill will help change that through facilitating early detection, awareness and eliminating the barriers and hurdles that can stop men from being tested. This bill will align Maine with 10 other states that have passed similar bills.

Thank you.