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**Testimony of William O'Neal**

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

Department of Public Safety

**IN OPPOSITION of LD 1510**

**"An Act to Establish Statutory Deadlines for Processing Applications for Emergency Medical Services Personnel"**

Presented by Representative FREDETTE of Newport.

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Hearing: Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> 2025, 1pm

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and honorable members of the joint standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

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 to LD 1510, "An Act to Establish Statutory Deadlines for Processing Applications for Emergency Medical Services Personnel."**

In response to this Bill our department conducted a comprehensive review that included 100% of our licensee data, including any outliers- by license level, with the average time our office takes to process in business days. A complete summary of that data is attached for your review.

This bill would require our office to act on a license application within 30 days, or the task moves to the Commissioner of Public Safety. **The current average time frame for our office to process an application based on a complete set of the past two years data is SEVEN calendar days.**

There are some outliers, we looked at all of them. We tracked our data at the level of the individual licensees to provide as much transparency as possible.

In the past two years, there were 42 times in 1926 applications, that issuance was delayed for LONGER than 30 days. The reasons for those delays are justified and show the value and importance of our current process. These included delays for allegations of unlicensed practice, a failure to report a criminal history, a failure to report an arrest, etc. That data is also detailed in the attachment. Worth noting, in 1926 applications we found evidence of a staff or processing error in just 2.

Our office reached out to the sponsor unsuccessfully on April 7<sup>th</sup> and then again through the Maine Ambulance Association on April 28<sup>th</sup> to try and discuss the proposed bill and provide our departments data around personnel licensing.

Maine EMS and our Licensing Agents have continued to work on streamlining our application processes by using available technology and lessons learned from issues applicants have presented; have implemented a new licensure type; and have maintained an issuance timeframe of approximately 7 days. I would recommend to this body that if more expedient processing or responsiveness is desired,

the solution is the addition of more personnel and the division of time-consuming job duties (e.g., separating the investigative function from the licensure function) to create a manageable workload.

Any addition of personnel should also contemplate the need to be competitive in salary with other specialized administrative professionals, such as those found in both the public and private sectors.

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

Wil O'Neal

Director, Maine EMS

## **Licensure Status Timeframe Report Criteria and Analysis**

Date of Author: April 10, 2025

**Criteria Used and Rationale:** The review period for this report was the previous two (2) years (Jan 1, 2023, to Dec 31, 2023, and Jan 1, 2024, to Dec 31, 2024) with complete application issuance information.

- The column identified as “Days to Issue” is the time in number of days from when the application is set to a status in our Licensure Management System called “Incomplete – Pending Maine SBI” and when the application is set to a status called “Issued”
  - This reflects when the application has been reviewed by a Licensing Agent, and the standardized items requested (e.g., verifications of licensure history from other states, out-of-state background checks, records related to criminal convictions, and other information needed to consider an application complete) have been provided by the applicant. Our workflow is to attempt to obtain the State of Maine Background Check Search Result as the last part of the information needed to issue licensure. The point an application is considered complete according to Maine EMS’s Rules and Statutes is when Maine EMS has all information, including the State of Maine Background Check Search Result; however, this point varies widely between applications as it is an individualized determination. As such, the above surrogate of the point when Maine EMS places the application into a queue for a State of Maine Criminal Background Check Search Result to be obtained from the State Bureau of Identification is used as a reasonable alternative that is more sensitive and less specific.
- If an application is sent from Incomplete-Pending Maine SBI back to another status other than issued and then back into the Incomplete-Pending Maine SBI, the report generated by the Imagetrend Licensure Management System creates a duplicated row by name in this report. The application with a duplicated row then underwent a manual review to ascertain the appropriate date from when the application was placed into the Incomplete – Pending Maine SBI, and a State of Maine Background Check Search Result was subsequently obtained. The duplicate row that was not representative of the above was removed from the report.
- Duplicate rows that reflected two different applications were retained in this report.

A search was performed in the report for the individuals whose application time in the above interval was greater than 30 days. These applications were then manually reviewed, and those applications had an identifier added to the report specifying, as appropriate, that:

- The application-processing exceeded 30 days because it involved the consideration of criminal history per Maine Law.
- The application-processing exceeded 30 days because it involved the consideration of the applicant's failure to disclose their criminal history.
- The application processing exceeded 30 days because it involved unlicensed practice by the applicant.
- The application processing exceeded 30 days because it involved a request for additional information from the applicant or a revision of the applicant's original application to correct a deficiency.
- The application-processing exceeded 30 days because there was a delay with another agency in supplying the requested information.

#### **Review of Report:**

1926 applications for licensure by an EMS clinician met the criteria for inclusion into the report. Of these applications, forty-two (42) (2.18%) exceeded thirty (30) days from the date their application was set to "Incomplete – Pending Maine SBI" to "Issuance". Of those forty-two (42) applications, thirty-six (36) involved a review of criminal history, unprofessional conduct, or action taken against a professional license or application for professional licensure. Of the remaining six (6) applications: one (1) involved the need for revision as it was submitted when the applicant could not demonstrate that they met the qualifications for licensure; one (1) involved a need for revision as a result of an error in the selection of a level of licensure by the applicant; one (1) involved an issue with the applicant obtaining out-of-state EMS licensure history (which was subsequently resolved by Maine EMS Staff on behalf of the applicant); one (1) involved a delay on a State of Maine Criminal History Search Result returning to Maine EMS; and two (2) had a delay in processing due to an error by Maine EMS Staff (0.01%). [all listed statistics are the percentage of that number as it relates to the overall number of applications] This report indicates that, including the forty-two (42) above applications, the average number of days to issue Clinical and Ambulance Operator licensure was approximately seven (7) days (actual value = 6.973). There are multiple application types within this reporting period; this is due to the implementation of the Emergency Medical Services Ambulance Operator Licensure in May of 2023, and the revision of our clinical licensure application to consolidate the EMS Provider – New Application with the EMS Provider – Reciprocity Application to reduce applicant confusion and staff time used to assist an applicant with correctly selecting the application that applies to them. After the removal of forty (40) of the forty-two (42) above applications that involved

additional circumstances that are not related to staff error, the number of qualifying applications for Clinical and Ambulance Operator was 1870. This reduced the average number of days to issue Clinical and Ambulance Operator licensure to approximately four (4) days (actual value = 4.389).

Respectfully submitted,

Jason J. Cooney, Licensing Agent,

Maine EMS