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Testimony of William O'Neal

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

Department of Public Safety

Neither For Nor Against LD 1676

"Resolve, to Study Ways to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Rural Emergency Medical Services Personnel Through Access to Health Insurance"

Presented by Presented by Representative EATON of Deer Isle.

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Hearing: Wednesday, April 30th, 2025.

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and honorable members of the 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 **Neither For Nor Against LD 1676**, a "Resolve, to Study Ways to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Rural Emergency Medical Services Personnel Through Access to Health Insurance"

This issue of inadequate healthcare resources in the most rural parts of our state is not unique to EMS, and it would be a potential shortfall of any proposed legislation not to think more broadly about changing the larger healthcare landscape in these areas. Discussions about solutions that may include insurance coverage, housing subsidies, financial incentives or other enticements to relocate to these areas should necessarily include a broader group of healthcare stakeholders.

As Maine EMS works to increase the capacity of our workforce development pipeline, making sure we have sustainable solutions for training, relocating, and keeping our clinical workforce in these difficult to serve areas are all parts of our larger strategy. We encourage the committee to work to connect the stakeholders in this conversation for a more robust and collaborative solution to support healthcare in rural Maine.

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

Wil O'Neal

Director, Maine EMS