



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE KENNETH W. FREDETTE**

### **IN SUPPORT OF LD 1369**

### **"An Act Providing Emergency Medical Services Training Through the Maine Community College System"**

May 5, 2025

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs / Health and Human Services

Senator Rafferty and Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee:

My name is Representative Kenneth W. Fredette, and I represent House District 33 which includes the Town of Newport and surrounding communities. I am pleased to appear before you today as the primary sponsor of LD 1369, "An Act Providing Emergency Medical Services Training Through the Maine Community College System."

This bill is straightforward in purpose but critically important in impact. It directs the Maine Community College System to provide no-cost Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training, including certification and degree options, within existing resources.

#### **The Need:**

Maine is facing a well-documented and growing shortage of EMS personnel—both EMTs and paramedics. This crisis is especially acute in our rural and underserved communities, where EMS providers are aging, overworked, and under-supported. Recruitment and retention are at crisis levels.

At the same time, too many potential EMS trainees—many of whom are young Mainers eager to serve their communities—are discouraged by the cost of certification courses, travel for training, or time away from work.

#### **The Solution:**

LD 1369 does not create a new program from scratch. Instead, it leverages the

existing network and capacity of Maine's community college campuses to offer these essential training courses at no cost to the student. The bill is explicitly

structured to be implemented within existing resources, respecting our fiscal constraints while empowering our workforce pipeline.

This initiative builds on the success of recent tuition-free programs in the trades and healthcare fields. It is aligned with Maine's workforce development goals and will increase both access to training and service coverage for emergency response.

**The Impact:**

By removing financial barriers and offering EMS training locally through our community colleges, we help meet the critical staffing needs of fire departments, ambulance services, and hospitals across Maine. We strengthen public safety and create new pathways to employment in high-need, high-impact roles.

This is a targeted investment in our people and our communities—and one that will save lives.

**Closing:**

I respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1369. Let's ensure that no willing Mainer is turned away from EMS training due to cost or geography, and that every town, from Portland to Fort Kent, has the emergency medical professionals they need.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.