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Senator, District 28

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony of Senator Rachel Talbot Ross in support of
LD 1830, “Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Protect Firefighters from Cancer”

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
May 7, 2025*

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Rachel Talbot Ross. I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of my hometown of Portland and Peaks Island. I am pleased to be a cosponsor and provide testimony in support of LD 1830, a “Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Protect Firefighters from Cancer.”

As we all know, firefighters are essential in safeguarding our communities. They run toward danger, often exposing themselves to harmful carcinogens and toxic substances that significantly increase their risk of developing cancer. Despite advancements in protective gear and training, the nature of their work places them in high-risk situations where their health is continually compromised.

LD 1830 seeks to establish a pilot program that will offer comprehensive early-detection cancer screenings to both active and retired firefighters. By providing these lifesaving screenings, we can reduce the long-term impacts of cancer on our first responders and support their continued service to our communities.

Specifically, this resolve requires the Commissioner of Public Safety to establish a program offering a range of screenings, including multi-cancer blood tests, ultrasounds, and CT scans, which are essential for detecting a wide array of cancers at early, more treatable stages. This proactive approach will save lives, reduce healthcare costs, and honor our firefighters' sacrifices every day.

Moreover, this pilot program aims to provide flexibility and choice by allowing firefighters to select the screening methods that best fit their individual needs. It also creates a committee to ensure the program is effectively administered and responsive to the evolving needs of our first responders.

As a cosponsor of this important legislation, I urge you to support this measure to protect those who protect us. Let us stand with our firefighters by investing in their long-term health and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.