



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Senator Mike Tipping, and I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County. I'm proud to serve as a cosponsor of LD 1835, which strengthens oversight and responsiveness in one of Maine's most critical access-to-care programs.

MaineCare's Nonemergency Transportation, known as NET, provides rides to medical appointments for individuals who are eligible for MaineCare but don't have access to reliable transportation. This includes older adults, people with disabilities, and others managing chronic or complex health needs. NET is one of the most heavily used health access programs in our state, providing over a million rides each year. When it works well, it helps people stay healthy, reduces strain on emergency services, and supports care continuity for providers.

I'm particularly appreciative of how this bill builds on the coordination goals we seek to advance through LD 1451 on community transportation coordination - which passed in the Transportation Committee earlier this week - by adding tools for performance tracking, transparency, and complaint resolution. It does not create a new program or bureaucracy, but strengthens what we already have and ensures that feedback from riders and communities helps shape how the system works.

LD 1835 improves the system by adding a public dashboard, an independent ombudsman, consistent regional input, and practical tools that promote accountability and better outcomes. These reforms help us identify service gaps early, resolve issues locally, and ensure that a missed ride or unresolved complaint does not get lost in the system. The reforms also help distinguish between providers who are doing excellent work and those who may need additional oversight or support.

Reliable transportation is a cornerstone of access to care. Whether someone is managing diabetes, cancer, recovery, or routine checkups, getting there matters. LD 1835 helps us make sure the system delivering those rides and is working as intended.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your continued commitment to the health and well-being of Maine people.