



Joseph Baldacci  
Senator, District 9

THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony in Support of LD 1835 - An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare  
Transportation**

*Provided by: Senator Joe Baldacci  
May 2025*

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

My name is Senator Joe Baldacci, and I represent Maine Senate District 9, which includes Bangor and surrounding Penobscot County communities. I am here to provide support of LD 1835 - An Act to Improve Nonemergency MaineCare Transportation, and I urge the committee's full support of this important legislation.

The MaineCare Nonemergency Transportation (NET) program delivers more than 1 million rides each year to help Maine people access essential care, dialysis, chemotherapy, substance use treatment, mental health counseling, and other critical services. This program supports health, safety, and quality of life for thousands of Mainers. It also helps healthcare providers reduce missed appointments and maintain continuity of care.

Maine invests more than \$25 million in state funds each year into this program, which in turn draws down over \$60 million in federal funding. Yet despite the scale and importance of this investment, we currently lack a reliable way to assess how well the program is functioning.

There is no publicly accessible data showing whether rides are completed on time, whether complaints are resolved effectively, or whether brokers are meeting the performance standards outlined in their contracts. This lack of transparency limits the ability of MaineCare members, the public, and policymakers to understand the quality of service being delivered and to take action when problems persist. When we can't see whether a system is working, we can't improve it. For a program that affects access to life-sustaining care, that gap in oversight matters. Greater visibility would also allow us

to identify positive trends, respond earlier to emerging issues, and support continuous improvement across the system.

LD 1835 provides practical tools to close that gap:

- It establishes a **Public Performance Dashboard**, giving everyone from riders to lawmakers a clear picture of trip reliability, call response times, complaint trends, and contract compliance.
- It creates an **Independent Ombudsman Office** to help MaineCare members navigate the system, address service issues, and have their concerns followed through.
- It strengthens **Complaint Tracking and Reporting** so that both routine issues and urgent incidents are documented, investigated, and resolved appropriately.

These measures promote accountability and ensure that this essential program delivers consistent, high-quality service across all regions. They also reinforce public trust in a system that many Mainers depend on for their health and independence.

Given the scale of Maine's investment in nonemergency medical transportation, the improvements proposed in LD 1835 are a sound and responsible step to ensure the program operates efficiently, meets performance expectations, and remains accountable to the people it serves.

I respectfully urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1835. Thank you for your time and for your continued service to Maine people.

Sincerely,

**Senator Joe Baldacci**

Maine Senate District 9