



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau
42 State House Station
Augusta, Maine
04333-0042

Janet Mills
GOVERNOR

Michael Sauschuck
COMMISSIONER

Testimony of Director Michael J. Labbe
Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau,
Department of Public Safety

LD 2085

"An Act to Modify Service Retirement Provisions to Include Additional Emergency Communications Positions in the 1998 Special Plan"

Before the Committee on Labor
January 20, 2026

Representative Bunker and members of the Committee on Labor, I am Michael Labbe Director of the Emergency Communications Bureau at the Department of Public Safety, and appear before you today in support of LD 2085, An Act to Modify Service Retirement Provisions to Include Additional Emergency Communications Positions in the 1998 Special Plan.

In July 2020 team members of Consolidated Emergency Communications Bureau that possessed the titles of Emergency Communications Specialist, Emergency Communications Specialist Lead, Emergency Communications Specials Supervisor, and Emergency Dispatch Admin were given the option to join the 1998 Special Retirement plan, at that time the title Emergency Communications Director position was not included.

The 1998 Special Plan requires 25 years of service with no minimum age restriction, or 10 years of service and age 55 to be eligible for a full retirement. The standard retirement plan is 25 years of service AND age 65 (depending on start date) to be eligible for a full retirement. Team members in the Emergency Communications Specialist categories were granted access to the Special Plan because of the high stress nature of the work they perform. Our Emergency Communication team members are the vital link between the public and emergency services, gathering critical information, and dispatching

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appropriate responders. They calmly ask precise questions to determine time life critical situations, provide life-saving instructions, (for example CPR), and maintain constant radio communication with responders. It's imperative that we provide internal promotional tracks for this dedicated workforce. The current system requires an internal candidate to drop out of the 1998 Special Retirement plan to be promoted into the listed position, which serves as a major deterrent when attempting to fill the position by promoting a well-qualified internal candidate.

This title should be included in the 1998 Special Retirement plan to ensure team members can retain the established retirement when moving to other roles within the bureau treating all team members equitably.



Michael J. Labbe