

Testimony of William O'Neal

Director, Maine Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (Maine EMS)

Department of Public Safety

IN SUPPORT of LD 2128

"An Act to Reorganize the Emergency Medical Services' Board to Implement the Recommendations of the Blue-Ribbon Commission to Study Emergency Medical Services in the State"

Presented by Senator BAILEY of York

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

My name is Wil O'Neal, I am the Director of Maine Emergency Medical Services, I am here today in strong support of LD 2128, a department bill.

This legislation represents the next critical step forward in implementing the Maine EMS Boards' 2035 Vision and 2 -year Strategic Plan and operationalizes the thoughtful recommendations of the previous Blue-Ribbon Commissions on Maine EMS.

By streamlining the current Maine Emergency Medical Services' Board—reducing the number of non-regional appointed members from 12 to 5—this bill creates a more agile and efficient leadership structure. Designed to promulgate rules and shape policy, the Board can continue its core focus, while reorganization preserves essential expertise by maintaining representation for dispatchers, municipal administration, EMS administrators, paramedics, and technicians, leaving maximum room to continue our important partnerships and representation from Maine's Fire and EMS Departments.

This move to improve the efficiency and agility of our existing Maine EMS Board has been in planning for some time, it is a component of our 2035 Vision and mapped out in our 2023-2025 2-year Strategic Plan for Maine EMS. This bill contains the second part of a two-phased approach not merely administrative; it builds support for a more responsive and future-ready EMS system for all Maine citizens.

Furthermore, LD 2128 strengthens the vital link between our regional councils and state-level oversight. By requiring regional councils to regularly advise their board representatives on local concerns and policies, we ensure that the diverse needs of Maine's geography are heard at the highest level. The bill's requirement for an annual report to our Committee of Jurisdiction by

January 1st creates a transparent mechanism for continuous improvement, allowing for proactive legislative adjustments to the Maine Emergency Medical Services System.

I am glad to provide support for any work sessions on this important topic, and happy to answer any questions. Thank you,

Wil O'Neal

Director, Maine EMS