

**Testimony of Alec Maybarduk  
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989**

**In support of LD 669, An Act Regarding Labor,  
Sponsored by Representative Amy Roeder**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor  
1pm March 3, 2026, Cross Building Room 202 and Electronically**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, I'm Alec Maybarduk, Executive Director of the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. We are a labor union representing 13,000 Maine workers, including Maine Department of Transportation employees who do highway maintenance throughout our Great State of Maine.

We're here today to support LD 669, sponsored by Representative Roeder, so that MaineDOT workers who perform highway maintenance work are included in the State's death benefit, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2026.

This amendment is in recognition of the on-the-job tragedy that claimed the lives of two of our members earlier this year.

MSEA Member James Brown, a Transportation Worker III, and MSEA Member Dwayne Campbell, a Transportation Crew Leader, both of Waterville, died Jan. 13, 2026, on Interstate 95 in Waterville. According to the National Transportation Safety Board's preliminary report on the incident, a vehicle entered the interstate without stopping at a temporary stop sign, collided with a tractor-trailer, and was pushed into the work zone, striking James, Dwayne, and another worker. James and Dwayne were forced over a bridge railing and fell to the road below. Both died at the scene.

The legislation would amend Title 25, Chapter 195-A to include MaineDOT workers who do highway maintenance work to the job classifications eligible for the death benefit.

The origins of the State's death benefit law go back to legislation that came before the Labor Committee in 2001; the law provided law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency medical services persons who die in the line of duty with a \$50,000 benefit paid to identified survivors as defined in statute. This was expanded in 2005 to include the roles of judicial marshals, forest rangers, detectives, and certain security personnel.

In 2020, LD 2044, was signed into law, adding additional Emergency Services personnel and Corrections Officers to the death benefit, increasing the death benefit to \$100,000 and indexing it to inflation.

The changes to the death benefit in 2020, which our union strongly supported, were prompted by the prior deaths of Maine firefighters and police officers. In introducing the change-in-

benefits legislation in 2020, former State Rep. Ackley put it this way: “These are the people — professionals and volunteers alike — who have the backs of the citizens of Maine when we are in harm’s way. These are inherently risky jobs. This bill is about ensuring that every Maine first responder knows that if, God forbid, they pay the ultimate price in the line of duty — a duty performed for our benefit — that the citizens of Maine have their backs.”

MaineDOT workers perform highway maintenance work, bridge work and routinely plow highways for more than 24 hours straight, to keep all of us safe and to keep Maine moving. Maine’s transportation workers are among the first responders to highway accidents, securing the scene for their fellow first responders.

We recognize that technical adjustments may be needed to ensure all at-risk MaineDOT workers are properly covered and that retroactivity language is clear. We are committed to working quickly with the committee and stakeholders to address those details. Additionally if the committee is so willing, we would also welcome including Maine Turnpike Authority workers whose duties closely mirror those of MaineDOT highway maintenance employees.

Thank you for your time, for your consideration, and I would be glad to answer any questions.