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## Lydia V. Crafts

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**Testimony of Rep. Lydia Crafts  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety  
In support of LD 1316: “An Act To Provide Funding for the Maine Length of Service Award Program”**

Senator Deshambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Lydia Crafts and I represent House District 90: the Lincoln County communities of Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Newcastle, part of Nobleboro, part of South Bristol and Monhegan Plantation. I’m pleased to testify in support of **LD 1316: “An Act To Provide Funding for the Maine Length of Service Award Program”**

In September 2020 my community lost an iconic business on the Pemaquid Peninsula. After 87 years of business, the Sea Gull Shop restaurant burned down in the middle of the night fire. While a devastating loss, it was an event that perfectly illustrates the importance of rural volunteer fire departments.

On that early fall evening, six surrounding towns sent crews to fight the fire, shuttling water from Bremen, creating a water curtain to prevent the loss of neighboring homes, and managing on-site fuel tanks. Crews extinguished the fire in a mere 40 minutes. Without 42 local volunteer firefighters jumping from their beds at 2 am, the damage would have certainly been far worse.

As a state, 93% of Maine’s firefighters are volunteers and they are a critical part of the health and safety of our rural communities. We rely on brave and committed men and women to respond to and protect our homes, our families and neighbors, and our communities. Funding the Length of Service Award Program is one straightforward way for us to demonstrate our state’s dedication to the individuals risking their lives to save the lives of their neighbors.

Please join me today in supporting LD 1316. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Lydia Crafts  
State Representative