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Rep. Scott Cuddy's Testimony in Favor of LD 1316

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety my name is Scott Cuddy and I live in Winterport. I represent House District 98 which is comprised of Frankfort, Searsport, Swanville, and Winterport. I'm here before you today to speak in favor of LD 1316.

Three of the four towns I represent have volunteer fire departments, and one of those has two volunteer departments. These departments are literally the hearts of their towns. In rural Maine, where paid departments are a rarity, it is the men and women who volunteer their time and talents that keep us safe. We need to do what we can to support these women and men.

I'm told by the Chiefs in my towns that LOSAP would be a help to them in recruiting. I believe that they are correct. But even if it wasn't going to help with recruiting I'd still support funding this program. These men and women put literally everything on the line for us, and this is a chance for us to give something back to them.

Volunteer departments cost pennies on the dollar compared to professional departments, and their membership is usually comprised of the same people that run bake sales, coach little league teams, hold town council seats, and volunteer in our schools. As I said earlier the departments are the heart of our small, rural towns. We need to do everything we can to keep those departments strong to help rural Maine.

Funding LOSAP would be a great step in the right direction, and I hope that this committee will support this wholeheartedly. Thank you for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have of me.