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Testimony in support of LD 1797

An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Length of Service Award Program

Wednesday January 19, 2022

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Jay Bradshaw; I live in Belgrade and am the Executive Director of the Maine Ambulance Association. The Maine Ambulance Association is a non-profit trade association that represents EMS services of all sizes and types (i.e. municipal, hospital, private, and volunteer).

We are submitting this testimony in support of LD 1797 and appreciate the addition of two emergency medical providers to the Board of Trustees and the way points are calculated for both volunteer firefighters and emergency medical services personnel. These modifications are important to reinforce support for non-firefighter emergency medical services persons.

Following that same line, we request consideration that the bill be amended to include all volunteer emergency medical services regardless of corporate structure. The current LOSAP language only extends to those who volunteer with a fire department, however, in many rural parts of Maine there are non-fire department, community-based ambulance services who also rely heavily on volunteer personnel.

We know you are all aware of the workforce crisis in emergency services. Crisis is not a term I use easily or with any comfort, but it is an apt way to describe the current situation and it affects every emergency service, fire and medical – and volunteer services are especially hard hit. The need to have more personnel entering the emergency services has been a reality for decades. Many of us (including several members of this committee) have been aware of this reality and been working on solutions to help incentivize people to get involved in their local fire/EMS agencies and to provide a modest award for those who currently do so.

The amendment we are requesting could maintain the existing definitions of both volunteer and emergency medical services person, and simply add inclusion of ambulance and non-transporting emergency medical service as licensed by Maine EMS and defined in Title 32 § 83 parts 5 and 14 respectively.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Thank you.