

Testimony of Frederick Brewer, CPA

**In Support of LD 1797, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Length of Service Award Program
January 19, 2022**


Good Morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and honorable members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Frederick Brewer, and I am the Governors Appointee to the Length of Service Award Program for the State of Maine. I was appointed to the LOSAP board because of my background as a CPA, my training and expertise working with municipalities and retirement plans & my life long experience as a fourth-generation volunteer firefighter on the Massasoit Engine Co. of Damariscotta. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of LD 1797, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Length of Service Award Program. The original bill that established the program was passed under the 127th legislative session in 2015. We have actively been working toward funding this bill since that time. We were able to secure funding for the administrative costs in the last legislative session of \$500,000 and now have begun the process of getting this plan established and working with a Third Party Administrator for the program.

This bill is the product of an effort to update our governing laws with two items missing from the original legislation that our board feels strongly needs to be addressed in order for our efforts to be successful. This bill seeks to provide two amendments for Maine's LOSAP:

The first part of this bill seeks to add two additional members to our board from the EMS community. When the original legislation was done it was intended to help encourage participation by all first responders. The board felt that participation by the EMS community was necessary to deliver proper service credit to those crucial volunteers and we are currently lacking that representation. We met with Sam Hurley shortly after he started as EMS director to gain his insight into structuring the Service Credit Calculation for EMS personnel. Ultimately the LOSAP Board determined that it was crucial to have voting members from the EMS community to help shape the development of this program. By adding two official members to this board we will give them a seat at the table and a say in this crucial program to recruit and retain first responders.

The second part of this bill formalizes the service credit calculation. In our enabling legislation the service credit calculation was left to the LOSAP Board to develop and then formalize to award service credit to Maine's First Responders. With the \$500,000 in funds approved by the Legislature in the previous session, we now need to formalize the service credit calculation so that participants can receive credit for their prior service. While there is no financial cost to the vesting calculation we need to give First Responders credit for their prior 5 years of service if they meet the vesting requirements. This bill will ensure that.

For the sake of the health and future of our volunteer first responders in Maine, and the communities that depend on them, I urge you to vote in favor of this bill. I welcome any questions about the operation of the program and thank you for your service.



Frederick Brewer