

Written Testimony in Support of LD 526
An Act to Provide Funding to Emergency Medical Services Organizations

Senator Beebe, Representative Salisbury and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Joanne Lebrun, I am an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), the EMS Regional Coordinator for EMS Region 2 Tri-County EMS (Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties) and have served our EMS system in Maine for more than 40 years.

In these 40 years I have witnessed our EMS system grow and mature, to meet the emergency medical needs of our citizens. However, the resources to support these needs have not kept pace with the needs of our system. Our EMS services, both those that provide transport and those that first respond, no longer have adequate resources to sustain proper response. This concern has been raised for many years, but it has now reached a critical stage.

- EMS services are not reimbursed the cost of their EMS responses.
- The reliance on volunteers as a large portion of the response professionals has diminished for many reasons (age, injury, competing interests of family and jobs, etc.)
- All the while operational costs have grown (fuel, insurance, vehicle maintenance, education, etc.)

I know that these critical concerns and others were noted in the recent Blue-Ribbon Commission on EMS and I am grateful for the Commission's time and attention to this crisis.

LD 526 will provide some immediate relief while additional solutions are being sought. Providing funds now, to stabilize our EMS services, will prevent closures, and will help reduce delays in responding to emergency medical calls in our communities. Timely EMS response is critical to the health and lives of the citizens of Maine.

I know it is hard for us to imagine that in 2023, those calling 911, particularly in rural parts of our state, would experience very long delays before receiving emergency medical care, or critical patients would wait many hours in a rural hospital for an ambulance to become available to provide transfer to a larger center; however, this is happening today in our state.

I am grateful for your consideration of LD 526 and for your care and support for our EMS system.

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