



53 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 202 | Portland, ME 04101  
Phone: 866-554-5380 | Fax: 207-775-5727 | TTY: 877-434-7598  
aarp.org/me | me@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaine  
facebook.com/aarpmaine | instagram.com/aarpme

March 1, 2023

## **Testimony Opposed to LD 422 "An Act to Eliminate the Requirement That Municipalities Provide Public Notice in Newspapers"**

Greetings Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and honorable members of the Committee on State and Local Government.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. Today AARP Maine submits this written testimony in opposition to LD 422.

For more than 35 years, AARP has been fighting to protect the rights of all Americans over 50. Passage of LD 422 would limit the rights of Maine residents to access information about their local government. Digital equity, where everyone has access 1) to affordable high-speed internet and 2) to the equipment and 3) digital skills required to use the service effectively, has not yet been achieved in Maine.

As the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) has noted, digital equity supports "full participation in our society, democracy and economy," and "is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services." Without the three components of digital equity being met, many segments of Maine's population – particularly 50+ and/or low income – depend on local newspapers and weeklies to access important public notices.

Furthermore, according to the Pew Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet released in 2021, only 63% of rural Americans have adopted high-speed internet service compared to nearly 80% of urban/suburban households. This rural-urban digital divide is a stark reality in Maine and is the primary reason that AARP Maine opposes LD 422.

As a result, while our state does not have another accessible way to allow ALL interested and impacted Mainers to access public notices that pertains to their local and regional governance, AARP Maine emphatically opposes LD 422. We urge that you do the same.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have question for me, I can be reached at [anderson@aarp.org](mailto:anderson@aarp.org) or at 207-330-1147.

Alf Anderson  
AARP Maine

