

Testimony of Jeff McCabe
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

Neither for Nor Against LD 1195, An Act to Provide That Documents Obtained by Subpoena by the Government Oversight Committee May Be Reviewed by Committee Members and Staff

Neither for Nor Against LD 1725, An Act to Strengthen Legislative Oversight of Government Agencies and Programs by Providing the Government Oversight Committee Access to Confidential Records

Neither for Nor Against LD 1275, An Act to Clarify the Powers of the Government Oversight Committee and Enable Committee Access to Department of Health and Human Services Documents Related to Investigations of Child Deaths

Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

May 2, 2023

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, members of the Committee on State and Local Government, I'm Jeff McCabe, director of politics and legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. The Maine Service Employees Association represents over 13,000 workers across the state.

We are neither for nor against LD 1195, LD 1725 and LD 1275. We understand the Legislature is seeking answers and trying to find solutions.

We are here with questions. We would offer to review any final language if that is helpful to the committee and we may be able to have one of our attorneys attend a future work session.

We sense that the primary purpose of these bills is to provide certain access to confidential information in the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) database within the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. However, we are trying to understand precisely what privileged information you are seeking and would be impacted by these bills. It seems there is interest in the sensitive records about families in the OCFS database, but can you identify particular privileged information that would be impacted by these seemingly broad bills?

We have the following questions.

What privileged documents are legislators seeking access to via these bills?

Would certain identifying information be kept confidential?

Would certain medical information be kept confidential?

What would happen if information viewed by elected official is not kept confidential? What, if any, recourse would there be as it would seem disclosing certain information would be a violation of the law?

Thank you for your time and if the committee has questions, we are happy to work with the analyst to find answers.