



MAINE AFL-CIO

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Testimony of Adam Goode, Maine AFL-CIO Legislative & Political Director, In Support of LD 1484 , “An Act Related to Public Access of Records of Certain Disciplinary Actions of Public Employees”

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Adam Goode. I'm the Legislative and Political Director of the Maine AFL-CIO. We represent 40,000 working people in the state of Maine. We work to improve the lives and working conditions of our members and all working people. We testify in support of LD 1484.

This bill aims to define “discipline” for public employees, which the public can access upon request. It is our understanding that this committee passed LD 1397 in the 131st, which included language on disciplinary records for public employees to ensure that public records more clearly delineated the conduct for which a public employee was disciplined. That law did not clearly define “discipline”.

Only disciplinary actions of public sector workers that are of a nature that impose or result in a financial disadvantage, including, but not limited to, termination, demotion or suspension without pay, should become public. We think that is the right approach. Under current law, corrective memos or reprimands are considered discipline. This means that currently policy violations that come from honest mistakes are also made public.

This bill draws an appropriate line on which disciplinary issues should be made public. Minor mistakes happen in the workplace. Corrections officers, firefighters, educators and county, municipal or state employees, especially those who are new, may deal with disciplinary action related to minor mistakes in order to address performance issues. Being late for work or in submitting reports, or failing to keep equipment clean, may require disciplinary action. These actions are not serious misconduct, are best addressed internally, and don't merit being public information.

Disciplinary actions where an employee faces suspension, demotion or termination are of a different nature and would remain public information if you pass LD 1484. We ask that you vote “ought to pass”.