



Testimony in Support of LD 1563:

“An Act to Establish Content Standards for Legislation”

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and the distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1563, "An Act to Establish Content Standards for Legislation."

LD 1563 represents a common-sense and necessary reform to strengthen transparency, accountability, and integrity in Maine's legislative process. By requiring that all legislation introduced to the Maine Legislature be fully drafted, rather than vague concepts or broad statements of intent, this bill ensures that elected officials, the public, and stakeholders are presented with clear, actionable proposals. It eliminates ambiguity and prevents the practice of introducing incomplete ideas that demand significant committee or executive branch interpretation and rewriting, processes that too often shield the true implications of legislation from public scrutiny.

Maine Policy Institute has consistently advocated for reforms that promote a more open and honest government. Allowing concept drafts to substitute for fully-formed legislation fosters government inefficiency, invites confusion, and undermines citizens' ability to engage meaningfully in the legislative process. When bills are introduced without substantive language, it becomes nearly impossible for Mainers to assess their impact or offer informed public comment at public hearings. In a representative democracy, the people deserve clarity and the ability to understand precisely how proposed laws will affect their lives, businesses, and communities.

Moreover, LD 1563 aligns Maine with best practices observed in other states that require prefiled, fully-developed legislation to move forward in the legislative process. Such standards enhance legislative professionalism, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, and allow committees to focus on refining meaningful proposals rather than building legislation from scratch. It ensures that lawmakers, not unelected bureaucrats or special interests, retain primary responsibility for shaping public policy.

We recognize that legislative drafting is a challenging and resource-intensive endeavor. However, protecting the integrity of the process demands that legislators clearly articulate their proposals before seeking public office endorsement. Ensuring that bills can "become law if not amended" is not a hurdle—it is a fundamental expectation of legislative responsibility.



In closing, we respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1563. Requiring complete, actionable bills at the time of introduction enhances transparency, improves legislative efficiency, and strengthens public trust in Maine's democratic institutions. We must raise the standards for lawmaking if we are to foster a government that is truly of, by, and for the people of this state. Thank you for your time and consideration.