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Testimony in Opposition to LD 2042: An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper

Senator Baldachi, Representative Salisbury, and respected members of the Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Riley Worth with AARP Maine, the nation's largest nonprofit and nonpartisan organization. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony in opposition to LD 2042.

AARP Maine recognizes the cost placed on towns and municipalities when they are required to advertise their upcoming town meetings and events in the local print newspaper. The trend in recent years towards social media, digitization, and online methods of news digestion will likely trend towards a day where printed newspaper communication is no longer needed to educate a local community. Here in Maine however, AARP, and our membership, does not feel that this time has come.

With thousands of our members located in communities that are still lucky enough to be served by some form of printed paper, they often depend on this source of information to allow them to participate in local events, catch up on the weekly news, or, in this case, be made aware of town and public meetings. A recent Pew survey shows that 37 percent of those 65 and older, and 23 percent of those 50-64 often still get their news from print, and in Maine, this includes these public notices.¹

Removing the requirement for municipalities to notify the publication of town events and meetings risks disenfranchising those who often have the longest tenure and interest in the municipality itself. To continue to provide public notice in newspapers, is to continue ensuring that older Mainers have access to the political systems, meetings, and events that shape the towns they live in, and we urge the committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 2042.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/news-platform-fact-sheet/>