

Katherine Grinnell
Washington
LD 2158

January 27, 2026

To Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Katherine Grinnell and I am the Select Board Chairperson for the Town of Washington. I am writing to you today to urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2158, An Act to Address Vacancies on the Knox County Budget Committee.

I am submitting this testimony not just as a resident, but as one of the elected town officials that cannot complete their town budget due to this paralysis of government. The residents of Washington meet in Town Meeting at the end of March to approve our annual budget. Without a 2026 Knox County budget, we cannot provide the Town with an accurate warrant article for vote.

The County Budget Committee is supposed to have nine members. Currently, we only have four. Under the Knox County Charter, we need a quorum of five members to conduct any official business. This includes the business of appointing new members to fill vacancies, leaving us in a "Catch-22" situation. LD 2158 provides the necessary legislative fix, allowing the County Commissioners to temporarily appoint members so we can get back to work.

The towns of Knox County rely on the Budget Committee to provide fiscal oversight and ensure tax dollars are spent efficiently. Currently, because we lack a quorum to meet or fill vacancies, our towns have effectively lost their seat at the table. This situation leaves municipal taxpayers without their Charter-mandated check on county spending.

Municipal officials need a predictable, transparent county assessment to set their own town budgets and mill rates. The current situation creates unnecessary uncertainty for every town in the county. If the Budget Committee cannot function, the budget process stalls, complicating financial planning for our local governments. For towns like Washington with a March Town Meeting, this uncertainty greatly hinders us in completing our municipal budget process to send to the Town for vote.

LD 2158 is the only viable path to restore this representation. By allowing the vacancies to be filled, you are ensuring that the towns of Knox County once again have a functioning body to protect their financial interests.

I respectfully urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2158.

Regards,
Katherine Grinnell
Select Board Chair
Town of Washington
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