



MAINE PRESS ASSOCIATION  
On the record since 1864

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Judith Meyer.

I offer this testimony on behalf of the Maine Press Association in opposition to the recently reworked LD 2121, Resolve, To Convene a Working Group to Study Methods for Enhancing the Safety of Judicial and Elected Officials, as written.

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Maine legislators are elected to serve constituents within specific House and Senate District geographic boundary lines. The public must know with certainty that senators and representatives who serve on the public's behalf actually live in the districts in which they serve.

As we have seen multiple times over the years, the public has questioned whether certain legislators live in the district in which they were elected to serve, which they are required to do. The only way to confirm that elected officials meet that obligation is for the public to know and be able to confirm residential addresses.

We appreciate that there are exceptions to confidentiality in the bill to facilitate challengers in an election and to aid in real estate transfers, among other things, but the public has as great or greater interest in this information as do political challengers and title companies.

We also recognize that petitions naming candidates for office and campaign finance statements would not be subject to redaction, as they should never be, but those records are more readily available than many other documents that would be eligible for redaction, defeating the purpose of targeted redaction entirely.

As this committee moves forward in its work on the resolve directing the Department of the Secretary of State to convene a working group, we ask that Maine's press be a named member of the working group to represent the press and public's compelling interests here.

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The Maine Press Association (MPA), founded in 1864, is one of the oldest professional news organizations in the nation. Our goals, as spelled out in our charter and by-laws are to promote and foster high ethical standards and the best interests of the newspapers, journalists, and media organizations of the state of Maine that constitute its membership; to encourage improved business and editorial practices and better media environment in the state; and to improve the conditions of journalism and journalists by promoting and protecting the principles of freedom of speech and of the press and the public's right to know.