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Sen. Nangle, Rep. Stover, members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Courtney Spencer, Vice President of Advertising for Masthead Maine. I am also here today representing the Maine Press Association, whose membership is comprised of all 6 daily papers as well as 35 weekly newspapers who cover the state of Maine.

I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 422, An Act to Eliminate the Requirement That Municipalities Provide Public Notice in Newspapers.

One of my responsibilities is oversight of legal notices. Many of my colleagues have spoken about the importance of transparency in government and I think we can agree that legal notices are integral to that goal. There is obviously a cost for that transparency, and I want to share with this committee what municipalities receive in return when they place a legal notice in newspapers.

- **Broader Distribution-** While I can't speak to the weekly traffic to any particular town website, I would encourage you to seek out that information and compare it to the distribution of our daily and weekly papers along with our online traffic. For example, between the Press Herald and the Portland Forecaster we distributed more than 155,000 copies in one week in print. In addition, people from the Portland area accessed the pressherald.com website more than 85,000 times in a single week in January. If transparency is your goal, the investment is small by comparison to the broad reach we deliver.
- **Hyper Targeted Distribution-** While larger papers have broader reach, the value of community-based papers offers a more targeted reach to the community. Even one of the smaller papers in our group, the American Journal, distributes more than 4,600 papers each week. It would be interesting to know if the website for the town of Westbrook sees that kind of weekly traffic.
- **Multi-Platform Distribution-** Municipal websites are able to offer information to those who have access and actively seek out public notices. Our publications and their associated websites allow both interested and passive parties to find this information across multiple platforms through our print products, our digital replicas, and our websites. If part of the return-on-investment consideration is to disseminate this information to the most people, the investment a town makes in publishing their notice in our publications delivers a higher rate of return than publishing it on their website alone.
- **Curation and Promotion-** Over the long history of the partnership between newspapers and town governments we have created an expectation with our citizens of where public notice information can be found. We have created specific environments in our print and web products where people know they can find this information. In our larger publications we group legal notices together, so readers know where to find them. Online we have worked hard to

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deliver an efficient experience where people can access all notices placed in the state and importantly, we promote and drive people to them. In 2022 alone, we delivered almost 11,000,000 ads to readers across pressherald.com, sunjournal.com, centralmaine.com, varsitymaine.com and our ePapers promoting our legal notices. If we were to sell those ad impressions the value of this campaign would be more than \$100,000.

We understand and value our obligation to our citizens and our partnership with our towns. We are dedicated to placing public notices efficient and effective. We meet our shared goal of transparency in government by delivering the most distribution across the most platforms and we believe that the investment of placing a public notice with any of our publications is in keeping with the results we deliver.