



**LEGAL SERVICES  
FOR MAINE ELDERS**

LD 580 -- An Act to Protect Maine Consumers by Prohibiting Fees Charged for Receiving Paper Statements from Financial Institutions and Credit Card Issuers

Testimony of John Brautigam, Esq. for Legal Services for Maine Elders  
Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services

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Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

My name is John Brautigam, and I am here today on behalf of Legal Services for Maine Elders. LSE provides free legal help for Mainers aged 60 and older when their basic human needs are at stake.

We thank the sponsor for bringing forth this bill, and we testify in support.

LD 580 would prohibit financial companies from charging consumers a fee for receiving a monthly paper record of their account. We support this bill as a useful consumer protection measure, particularly for individuals on fixed incomes, older Mainers, and those who may not have reliable access to or familiarity with digital financial management tools.

For many consumers, particularly older adults and those in rural areas, paper statements are not a luxury but a necessity. While electronic statements and online account management may be convenient for some, they are not viable for everyone. Many individuals in Maine still do not have reliable, easy access to a computer, smartphone, or good internet service. Others may lack the technical proficiency or confidence to navigate online accounts securely. We should safeguard their interests.

Moreover, requiring individuals to pay for a paper statement effectively imposes a financial penalty on those who cannot or choose not to use digital services. This is especially unfair for people on fixed incomes, such as retirees and those receiving Social Security or disability benefits, who carefully budget their expenses. These fees, while seemingly small, add up over time and disproportionately affect those least able to absorb them.

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Additionally, paper statements serve an important role in financial accountability. They provide a tangible record that consumers can review at their own pace, compare against previous statements, and use for tax preparation or financial planning. Many people feel more secure managing their financial documents in this format rather than relying on email communications that may be lost, compromised, or difficult to retrieve when needed. Some financial businesses make it very difficult to obtain older records through an on-line portal.

The Committee may also wish to consider the rising threat of cyber scams and identity theft targeting vulnerable consumers. We work on this issue every day with our clients. Given the increasing prevalence of online fraud and data breaches, consumers should not be pressured into electronic-only communication.

I urge the committee to support LD 580 and ensure that all consumers, regardless of their comfort with or access to digital tools, can receive their financial statements without undue burden. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you.