



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 1091 - *An Act to Reinforce Free Speech at Town Meetings by Allowing Persons a Minimum Amount of Time in Which to Speak*

March 31, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1091 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

Freedom of speech is a constitutional right that we all hold dear. When it comes to town meetings, those with an open meeting format allow their residents an opportunity for floor discussions relating to a particular warrant article. During this time, residents can express their thoughts freely and are rarely limited in their length of time to speak.

However, just like when legislative committees are holding a public hearing on a hot topic, there are times when comments need to be limited in time to accommodate all who would like to address the board, in a fair and equitable manner. There are concerns among local leaders that requiring residents to have at least two minutes to speak at a town meeting could prevent town business from being conducted effectively and could derail an ordinary business meeting.

Currently, towns have rules in place for the conduct of their town meetings and feel this bill is an unnecessary measure without a clear problem to point to. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.



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