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Testimony of Representative Paul R. Flynn, District 63, Albion

In Support of LD 1155, An Act to Ensure Appropriate County Government Operations Relating to the Position of Dedimus Justice

Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. April 2, 2025

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Paul Flynn, and I represent House District 63, the Eastern Kennebec County towns of Winslow, Albion, Unity Township and the Western Waldo County community of Freedom. I appear to you today to present legislation meant to address a significant deficiency facing county government and some of our county law enforcement agencies. I present this Legislation of behalf of the Maine County Commissioners Association.

We seek to address this with LD 1155. Counties throughout Maine rely on Dedimus Justices to ensure that the proper administration of oaths are completed in a timely manner. Whether elected officials, those approved as notaries, or new law enforcement officers, all are essential for a wide variety of county operations.

What does LD 1155 do? This legislation aims to address the backlog and inefficiencies in appointing new Dedimus Justices for county operations. The bill also seeks to assure an update to the list of Dedimus Justices, remove ineligible individuals, and improve the process to ensure that counties have the necessary personnel for administrative functions.

The Governor's office, which reviews and approves applications for new Dedimus Justices has imposed a moratorium on this position. While no clear substantial reason has been presented for this action, it has resulted in some serious challenges for many sheriffs and counties in replacing those staff who previously served in this position. Over the last number of years of the moratorium many staff holding the position have turned over due to retirements or jobs changes.

Added to which there is no process for vetting the current list on the Secretary of State's website to assure that information is accurate and that those listed are still available, able and willing to serve the needs of counties or the general public.

While this is limited in scope it is necessary for the process of swearing in officials in county government.

I respectfully ask the committee to move LD 1155 forward with an affirmative report to address the challenges facing those in County Government. Thank you.