



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony by Representative Steve Bishop

In support of

LD 1484, An Act Related to Public Access of Records of Certain Disciplinary Actions of Public Employees

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

April 11, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Steve Bishop, and I represent the residents of Bucksport, Orland, Penobscot, and Verona Island in House District 17. Prior to my service in the Maine House, I served with the Bucksport Police Department and as Deputy Mayor for the Town of Bucksport. I am honored to be here today to introduce LD 1484, An Act Related to Public Access of Records of Certain Disciplinary Actions of Public Employees.

This bill modifies provisions of law related to the confidentiality of state, county, and municipal employee records. Under current law, if disciplinary action is taken against one of these categories of public employees, the final written decision associated with that action is not considered confidential and is therefore available to the public if requested. This legislation clarifies that only disciplinary actions that are of a nature that impose or result in a financial disadvantage, including, but not limited to, termination, demotion, or suspension without pay, may become public.

Public employees from all sectors and all regions of Maine provide invaluable services to the people of this State. But they are also employees that receive the most scrutiny because unlike their private employee counterparts, their work records can be accessed under FOIA requests. Knowing that every performance issue, regardless as to how minor it may be, being subject to public review can make a perspective employee think twice before accepting a public sector position.

House District 17 Orland, Penobscot, Verona Island, and Bucksport



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LD 1484 is a bill that would invest in the quality of services provided by public employees and to help ensure that small infractions such as being late to work, shutting down a computer at the end of the day, or filing a late report, which should be teachable moments do not become part of a permanent public record. Clearly defining what constitutes a disciplinary action that is publicly available is a commonsense change to our law that will help support and retain quality employees in the public sector.

You will be hearing from others today who have the knowledge and experience developing successful public teams that have served our communities whether it is in law enforcement, the classrooms, or in other public service environments. I ask that you lean into the first-hand experience testimony you are about to hear and direct your questions to these experts.

Thank you for your time and consideration of supporting LD 1484.