



MAINE PRESS ASSOCIATION

On the record since 1864

P.O. Box 336 Camden, ME 04843

mainepressassociation.org

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Judith Meyer. I offer testimony on behalf of the Maine Press Association in favor of LD 1797, An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right to Know Advisory Committee Concerning Denials of Public Records Requests.

* * *

The Maine Press Association fully supports the bill before you as a step toward greater understanding of the reason a records request made under Maine's Freedom of Access Act has been denied.

This proposed requirement to cite statutory authority used as the basis for denial of a records request is similar to the existing requirement for a government entity to cite the statutory authority to convene an executive session, which each go to greater public understanding of the business of and decisions made by government entities.

A public records request already requires the government entity to review the request, and if following that review a decision is made to deny the request, the statutory authority for that decision has already been identified by government officials. Sharing that specific statutory foundation with the requestor offers both the requestor and the greater public clear understanding for the basis of the denial, while also providing the requestor with the statutory reference upon which an appeal might be made.

* * *

The **Maine Press Association**, founded in 1864, is one of the oldest professional news organizations in the nation. Our goals, as spelled out in our charter and by-laws are: To promote and foster high ethical standards and the best interests of the newspapers, journalists, and media organizations of the state of Maine that constitute its membership; to encourage improved business and editorial practices and better media environment in the state; and to improve the conditions of journalism and journalists by promoting and protecting the principles of freedom of speech and of the press and the public's right to know.