



Maine Women's Lobby

January 20, 2026

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here in support of **"LD 2121 An Act to Enhance the Safety of Judicial and Elected Officials, Constitutional Officers and the State Auditor by Allowing Certain Personal Information to Be Removed from Designated Public Records"** and we thank Representative Faircloth for sponsoring this important bill.

In recent years, we have seen a growing trend of acts of politically motivated violence against public and elected officials, political candidates, judges, political staff, and other government employees. In April of last year, an arsonist set fire to Democratic Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro's house while he and his family were sleeping.¹ In July, a masked gunman shot two Minnesota Democratic state lawmakers, killing one.² According to recent studies, **the number of politically motivated plots and acts of violence in the past 5 years is more than three times higher than those of the last 25 years combined.**³

These are only some of the examples of the increasing danger public servants and political figures are facing in the current climate, and **we must not forget that political violence has for decades disproportionately been enacted against women, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants and people of color.**

In Maine, we are seeing a severe and frightening increase of threats and political violence, many involving elected official's homes. A few examples just from the last two years include a high profile elected official who received numerous "swatting" attempts at her home;⁴ bomb threats that were delivered to the homes of committee chairs; and a member of leadership enduring

¹ Witz, B. (2025, April 16). *Man who set fire to Shapiro's mansion cited treatment of Palestinians, police say.* *The New York Times.*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/16/us/cody-balmer-motive-arson-gaza-palestinian-shapiro.html>

² Minnesota House of Representatives. (2025, June 14). *Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman, husband killed in attack.* Minnesota House Session Daily. <https://www.house.mn.gov/sessiondaily/Story/18843>

³ McCabe, R. (2024, October 21). *The rising threat of anti-government domestic terrorism: What the data tells us.* Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/rising-threat-anti-government-domestic-terrorism-what-data-tells-us>

⁴ PBS NewsHour. (2023, December 30). *Maine's secretary of state targeted in swatting call after removing Trump from ballot.* PBS.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/maines-secretary-of-state-targeted-in-swatting-call-after-removing-trump-from-ballot>

misogynistic and racist flyers spread in her neighborhood. **It must be noted that in all of these cases, the targets were women, and the data is women elected officials experience higher rates of harassment and threats of violence⁵.**

Allowing public officials and their family members to request that certain personal information, such as home addresses, be removed from public records and publicly available online resources **reduces their vulnerability to political violence by making it harder for perpetrators to locate, harass, or target them.**

Political violence is never acceptable. It is a threat to the fabric of civil society, and every person deserves to live in a world where they do not fear bodily harm or death because of who they are or what they believe.

We hope you will vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 2121.

Sincerely,

Lily Bohen James
Maine Women's Lobby

⁵ National Women's Law Center (2025). The Rise in Political Violence Against Women is No Coincidence—These Threats Are Meant to Remove Power from Women. Retrieved from <https://nwlc.org/the-rise-in-political-violence-against-women-is-no-coincidence-these-threats-are-meant-to-remove-power-from-women/>