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LD 16

I ask the Committee to oppose LD 16 because it unnecessarily costs the state money and because it reduces democratic accountability in the form of competitive elections. LD 16 would create the two smallest prosecutorial districts by population in the state, and would create a precedent that could lead to the creation of many additional prosecutorial districts that would still be larger than the proposed District 9 in LD 16. Maine's eight district attorneys could easily become twelve or more based on the logic of LD 16; after all, if Washington County's 32,000 residents need their own district attorney, wouldn't the same hold true for Oxford County's 59,000, Waldo County's 41,000, Sagadahoc County's 38,000, and Lincoln County's 37,000?

In addition to extra costs associated with more elected prosecutors and additional bureaucracy, shrinking the size of prosecutorial districts would further undermine efforts to hold these powerful officials accountable. Legislative oversight efforts would be stretched, as would investigative journalism efforts. Perhaps worst of all, creating additional offices would only increase the likelihood that candidates would run unopposed, thereby depriving voters of any meaningful input as to who serves as their local district attorney. Rural Maine has a hard enough time finding lawyers who are willing to run for and serve in these important offices; increasing the number of elected prosecutors will only result in more uncontested elections. Please vote no on this likely well-intentioned, but ultimately counterproductive bill.