



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **Tiffany Strout**

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Wednesday January 22, 2025

### **Public Testimony of LD 16 – An Act to Establish Separate Prosecutorial Districts in Downeast Maine**

Presented by Representative Strout of Harrington – District 11

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary committee. I am Representative Tiffany Strout from Harrington, representing the towns of Milbridge, Harrington, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Centerville, Addison, Jonesport, Beals, Jonesboro, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville and Machias and I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD 16 An Act to Establish Separate Prosecutorial Districts in DownEast Maine.

Growing up in DownEast Maine was a wonderful opportunity to be with generations of family and for the close-knit communities. In addition, the area was always safe and crime was low especially violent crime. I grew up in the no cell phone age, not the dark age like my kid thinks, but in a time where we would leave the house and be told what time to be home and there was no worry in between.

Unfortunately, the days of how I grew up seem to be falling further away. I attribute the increase in crime to both mental health decline as well as the drug epidemic we have in our county. The increase in these problems has escalated crime and the need for speedy processing of those accused of the crimes to levels that were not experienced even 10 years ago.

Our current District Attorney, Mr. Granger, who we share with Hancock County, has brought back integrity and due process to the District Attorney's offices. This bill is not intended to take away from the impact and good work he and his team have and will continue to provide, this bill's intent is to free up his time to focus on a single county case load for more efficient case review and prosecution.

I think we all wish we wouldn't have to have the conversation about adding any additional District Attorneys or Law Enforcement to the state, but unfortunately, that is not the time we are currently living in. Instead, we are at a point where people are struggling and making tough decisions, sometimes resulting in breaking the laws. Allowing Washington County to have their own District Attorney works toward the due process as outlined in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> amendments.

Those charged with a crime have the right to an attorney and a speedy trial. To keep with those promises the Constitution outlines, Washington County should have their own District Attorney allowing timely thorough investigations to help insure those innocent are not wrongfully convicted and those who should be convicted do not have their charges dismissed for lack of Constitutional guarantees.

Thank you for your time today and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tiffany Strout'.

Tiffany Strout  
State Representative

District 11 Addison, Beals, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Harrington, Jonesboro, Jonesport, Machias, Milbridge, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville, Centerville Township, and North Washington (Part)