

**Testimony in support of LD 152  
to the Judiciary Committee**

February 5, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Sarah Johnson and I am a resident of Sanford.

I am writing in support of LD152, An Act to Amend the Freedom of Access Act to Require a Specific Time Frame for Agencies to Comply with Requests for Public Records.

From the US Government FOIA site:

*“The basic function of the Freedom of Information Act is to ensure informed citizens, vital to the functioning of a democratic society.”*

(<https://www.foia.gov/>)

I have used the FOAA process many times, as I try to be an informed citizen. I appreciate that data collection is a time consuming process, but I do support placing a time limit on compliance. I had one recent request that went on over 5 months until it was denied for requesting too much data. I will start the process again with multiple requests of smaller data sets, hoping for a better outcome. Often learning new information brings up more questions and so would require another FOAA request. Unlimited turn around times for information is a barrier to learning and participation in society.

Information, to citizens and a free press, is indeed vital to the transparency of government, and so the functioning of a democracy. Having no documented limit to ‘reasonable time frame’ blocks the process. Lengthy waiting periods for data may produce the perception that an agency does not support transparency. I feel it is important that all Mainers feel they are part of our democratic process. This includes having access to the information they request, and have a right to know, with as few barriers as possible.

I hope you will support this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sarah Johnson  
Sanford, Maine.