Ryan Michaels
Berwick
LD 2150

Public Testimony in Opposition to LD 2150
Ryan Michaels

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ryan Michaels. I am a Maine resident, a father, a disabled veteran, and a citizen who has spent the last year trying—lawfully, persistently, and in good faith—to hold state agencies accountable for actions that have harmed my family.

I am here in opposition to LD 2150 because I am living proof of why this bill must not pass.

This legislation is being presented as a way to manage "harassment" and "confrontation." In reality, it formalizes a system that allows the State to retaliate against speech, restrict access, and silence criticism first—then attempt to justify it later. That is not a hypothetical concern. That is my lived experience.

I have been barred from multiple Department of Health and Human Services buildings—one for a full year, another for six months. These exclusions were not the result of violence, threats, or unlawful behavior. They occurred after I raised concerns, demanded accountability, and documented misconduct. They were retaliatory in effect, and they happened without due process.

I was not violent. I was not threatening. I did not harass anyone.
No evidence was presented, no findings were made, and no hearing ever occurred.

What I did do was ask questions. I insisted on written answers. I challenged false narratives. I advocated for my children. For that, I was treated not as a citizen exercising constitutional rights, but as a problem to be removed from public view.

LD 2150 would not prevent this kind of abuse. It would enshrine it into law.

Under this bill, the very agencies being challenged are empowered to decide—unilaterally—whether someone is "confrontational." That term is undefined. It is subjective. And in practice, it will be applied disproportionately to those who criticize government action.

The bill authorizes the State to restrict access to public property, public services, and communication with government entities before any court ever reviews the facts. That is not due process. That is administrative punishment followed by delayed review—if the person targeted can endure long enough to reach it.

Speech does not become harassment because it is persistent.
It does not become harassment because it is uncomfortable.
And it does not become harassment because it exposes institutional failure.

Journalism is confrontational.
Whistleblowing is confrontational.
Advocacy is confrontational.
Parental defense is confrontational.
Democracy itself is confrontational.

LD 2150 deliberately blurs that line, and it does so at the expense of constitutional protections.

I want to pause here to acknowledge something important for the record.

The Maine Government Oversight Committee has been actively seeking answers from the Department of Health and Human Services. As the public record shows, those answers have been insufficient. Concerns have gone unresolved. Transparency has been resisted. Accountability has not been forthcoming.

That reality is precisely why LD 127 exists.

LD 127 is a bipartisan bill, championed by Senator Hickman along with members of

both parties, including Senator Timberlake. Its purpose is clear: to allow the Government Oversight Committee to look behind the curtain of "confidentiality" that has repeatedly been used to shield DHHS from meaningful scrutiny.

LD 127 acknowledges a simple truth: when accountability fails, oversight must be strengthened.

That is why LD 2150 raises such serious concern.

In the same legislative session where this body is being asked—rightly—to expand oversight of DHHS because answers have not been satisfactory, it is also being asked to expand that same department's authority to restrict access, silence critics, and label confrontation as harassment before any court review occurs.

Those two positions cannot be reconciled.

You cannot acknowledge that transparency and accountability are lacking, and at the same time give the very system struggling with accountability broader power to suppress dissent and scrutiny.

That is not a question of politics.
It is a question of logic, consistency, and principle.

Supporters may point to court involvement after 90 days. But constitutional harm does not wait 90 days. The chilling effect is immediate. The exclusion is immediate. The silence is immediate. Rights denied today are not restored by a hearing months later.

This bill also invites viewpoint discrimination. Those who praise state agencies will not be labeled harassing. Those who challenge them will be. That is not conjecture—it is exactly how unchecked discretion operates, and it is exactly what my experience demonstrates.

I ask you to consider this carefully:
If LD 2150 had already been law, would the retaliation I experienced have been stopped—or would it have been legally validated?

The truth is this: state power was used to silence a critic, and the mechanisms meant to check that power failed. LD 2150 does not correct that failure. It lowers the bar for it to happen again.

And I will end with this.

I have spoken in truth, in the open, and on the public record. I have been transparent across legislative committees, courtrooms, town selectboards, and city halls. I have not hidden. I have not acted anonymously. I have trusted process—even when process failed me.

Records do not speak for themselves—because records cannot speak.
But when you choose to read them, to examine them, to connect them, and to allow due process, they tell a very clear story.

The pattern exists.
The record exists.
And now, so does notice.

What you choose to do next will determine whether this Legislature stands as a safeguard against abuse of power—or becomes part of the record that proves it was allowed to continue.

LD 2150 should not be amended.
It should not be clarified.
It should be rejected outright.

Thank you for your time—and for your responsibility to protect the people, not the power of the State.