



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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RE: LD 1019

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government, good morning. I'm Representative Dick Bradstreet and I represent House District 80, which is comprised of my home town of Vassalboro, Windsor, Somerville, part of Augusta and the Unorganized Territory of Hibbert's Gore. I am her today to present to you LD 1019, *An Act to Promote Transparent Emergency Management*.

For the past year, Maine has essentially had an authoritarian form of government, given the way the Emergency Powers has been handled by the Chief Executive. I understand that the pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge to our state and how we should address and perform the proper functions of governing. Our Constitution provides co-equal branches of government, but during this last year the Legislature has been excluded from its proper function of, among other things, the checks and balances inherent in a representative form of government. There have been no checks and there has been no balance. The people have effectively been without representation on matters that pertain to a myriad of matters affecting their rights and well-being. We need to take steps to ensure that the Executive branch rightfully shares responsibility of governing with the Legislative branch.

As legislators we have had no say in what decisions are being made that affect every citizen of the State of Maine. We have no idea of what discussions are taking place, who is involved in these discussions, what information is used to make decisions, what information is being ignored in the process, and what are the deciding factors in making what are life altering decisions for so many people, who are essentially being kept in the dark by their government. I think it's always necessary to remember that here in America, it is not a case of the Government and its people, but the people and **their** government. We have not been operating according to this tenet.

I would like to point out that, had we been involved as we should have in fulfilling our responsibility to represent our constituents, we may have been in substantial agreement with the decisions made by the Administration. But we don't know if that's true because we have been excluded from the process! We are not able to tell our neighbors why **their** government is doing specific things, because we don't know and that is wrong! It is not simply the decisions that have been made, but that the process of representative government has been violated.

The proper functioning of government is never easy. Those of us who ran for office didn't expect that things would always go smoothly, but even though our Constitutional obligations can be very unwieldy and difficult, they still must be done. The enactment of LD 1019 will give the Legislature more say in how Emergency proclamations are renewed and therefore provide more transparency for the people to see how its government operates, even during times of a pandemic. To be candid about it, I'm not as concerned with simply the passage of this bill as I am with your careful consideration and positive action on the message that the similarly themed bills before you today are conveying. The State and Local Government committee has an opportunity to fix what needs to be fixed. I believe we are truly at a crossroad. Our system of balanced government has stood the test of time, but it is slowly eroding. It is tempting to let these things pass and hope that they will take care of themselves, but we must resist that temptation. It's time for the Maine State Legislature to broaden its shoulders and restore at once its proper role in governing the State of Maine. The process of representative government must be restored! Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dick Bradstreet", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Representative Dick Bradstreet  
House District 80