

Alan Hougham
Limerick, ME

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government,

My name is Alan Hougham and I live in Limerick, Maine.

I am writing today to ask that you vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 980. The emergency authority claimed by Governor Mills in March 2020 and continuing today have had a serious impact on my community and my own family. Although most Mainers understood the initial need for these actions and enthusiastically embraced the goal of "flattening the curve", the governor and the state government have exceeded their natural authority by suppressing the rights of the people of Maine for a full year (and counting). The impact of this is not imaginary. Many businesses have closed forever, including a restaurant in our community that was a social hub for our rural area. Many of our children, especially our middle schoolers, have faced very real emotional distress by the interruption of their social interactions, which are so critical to their development. Not all of them have supportive families to help them through this time. Not every family can work from home and be with their isolated children. My family has experienced first hand the disintegration of our spiritual community, despite valiant efforts by our congregation to stay connected. Not everyone is resilient. Mental health issues have risen to the surface. Some, who desperately need physical contact, have disappeared from community. Others, facing addiction, have relapsed in the absence of crucial support. So many jobs have been lost and so many people have come to depend on the government for financial support. This is not the American way. Our nation is unique. We are independent and self-sufficient. A year under emergency conditions has struck at that independent spirit, which is the heart and soul of Maine and our nation. I implore you today to return the fate of the people of Maine into their own hands. We are capable and we trust our elected representatives, who should have never been shut out of the problem resolution process. What has been done is simply wrong. I respectfully ask that you vote "Ought to Pass"

In addition, I ask that you seriously consider the proposals of LD 14, 131, 608, 628, 729, 955, 985, 1019, and 1039 - any efforts you make today to remove the abuse of power of the last year will be a win for the people of Maine.

Respectfully,
Alan Hougham