

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and members of the Legislative Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Gina LeDuc-Kuntz and I am a resident of Freeport.

I am writing to you today to urge you to take steps in limiting the Governor's emergency powers by placing fair limitations around those powers.

For over a year now, Mainers have been subject to emergency policy created by one person who has been basing policy decisions on government officials rather than the people. This is not how a Republic is designed to function.

There is a reason why our government distributes decision making powers amongst three separate but equal branches of government; concentrated power is dangerous and silences the very people the government is designed to protect.

Over this past year, we have seen catastrophic impacts on local businesses, churches, schools and our entire Maine population. Policy has been implemented inequitably, favoring large box corporations over local Maine businesses owners. Children have lost a year of childhood and education. Friendships have been weakened. Churches have been severely restricted, adversely impacting attendance and undermining tradition. Gatherings have been few. Mental health has declined. Drugs overdoses have escalated. Fatal car crashes have escalated. The flu has nearly disappeared. Why? Because Governor Mill's covid policies have been illogical, not based in fact and in the end, damaging to the entire State of Maine.

I urge you to draft policy to ensure a power grab, such as we have seen from Janet Mills, never happens again in Maine and to the Maine people. I urge you to support limiting a State of Emergency to 30 days and to limit a State of Emergency renewal to $\frac{2}{3}$ vote from the Maine State Legislatures, not by proclamation. I urge to to vote "ought to pass" on the following bills: **LD 14, Act To Require a Two-thirds Vote To Extend a State of Emergency, LD 131, An Act To Amend the Governor's Emergency Powers, LD 608, An Act Regarding the Governor's Emergency Powers, LD 980, An Act To Establish Balance in the Governor's Emergency Powers, LD 1019, An Act To Promote Transparent Emergency Management, and LD 1220, An Act To Require a Two-thirds Vote of the Legislature Every 2 Weeks To Maintain a State of Emergency Declared by the Governor**

I also urge you to modify how a businesses and religious organizations are treated during a State of Emergency by voting **LD 1142, An Act To Prohibit the Unequal Restriction of Essential Businesses during a State of Civil Emergency** and **LD 628, An Act To Protect Businesses and Civic and Religious Organizations from Actions Taken Pursuant to an Emergency Proclamation** "ought to pass."

Neither small, local businesses nor churches are enemies of the State as the Governor's policies seem to indicate. Small businesses employee Mainers keeping us off unemployment, food stamps and other government programs. Small businesses pay taxes to support the State. Religion is vital in shaping the morality of future citizens. The State will have a much more difficult job in maintaining peace and order without the moral construct found in religion and delivered through our Churches. Why then, the inequitable treatment to businesses and Churches we have seen from the Mill's administration during this State of Emergency? What does the State gain? Chaos is what it gains.

Gina LeDuc-Kuntz
Freeport, Maine