



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony in Support of:

LD 876, "An Act to Promote Efficiency in County and Municipal Government."

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Good Day, Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee. I am Representative Sue Wilkinson Austin, proudly representing portions of my home town of Gray, along with portions of Raymond, Casco and all of Frye Island in Big Sebago Lake.

I am here to testify in support of LD 876, "An Act To Promote Efficiency in County and Municipal Government."

This bill is presented in an effort to assist local government in meeting the required notification timeline at present for public meetings by utilizing an alternative method of publication.

In our area of Gray-New Gloucester the ol' stand by small weekly news publications in these two towns which make up our school district are no longer in business. That pretty much forces the towns to rely on the Portland Press Herald and the Sun Journal to alert our citizenry of the upcoming town and school meetings.

Many of you may have served in a local elected position prior to taking your seats here at this table and you may have had an experience where a decision that would have saved a substantive amount of money on a local initiative had to be waived to meet the time requirement of prior notice to the public regarding that decision. I did experience occasions when we found we were off by just a day or so to meet the printing deadline that would have fulfilled the notification requirement. This isn't about fast tracking everything but often about being more efficient to meet the institutions needs in a more cost-effective manner.

Utilizing the option of county and municipal electronic websites is one mechanism of meeting the deserved transparency we all take an oath to maintain and protect for the preservation of our institutions and the inclusion and wellbeing of our citizenry.

On a closing note, we just received an email from the President of the Senate, Troy Jackson, announcing that the present requirement of the two weeks public notice for bill hearings in the large circular press has been adjusted to a one week notice requirement that procedural change is an example of flexibility that is at times necessitated to do business and be not only more efficient but more effective in meeting goals!

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue Austin
State Representative

District 67 portions of Gray, Raymond, Casco and all of Frye Island