

# The Ellsworth American.

30 Water Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605  
207-667-2576 • Fax 207-667-3431  
ellsworthamerican.com

310 Main Street, Bar Harbor, ME 04609  
207-288-0556 • Fax 207-288-0559  
mdislander.com

April 7, 2021

My name is Chris Crockett, I am the publisher of *The Ellsworth American, Courier-Gazette, Mount Desert Islander, Republican Journal, Camden Herald and the Free Press*. I oppose “LD 876, SP0290 An Act To Promote Efficiency in County and Municipal Government”

Public Notices play a critical role in government accountability. Newspapers have a long history of providing third-party oversight of the state and local governments. This bill puts said oversight in jeopardy.

I understand, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, that local governments are trying hard to lower expenses, but public notices are not the right place to do that. From accessibility to accountability to simple oversight, a printed public notice ensures due process when a public meeting is being held or when a bid is needed. By limiting public notice exposure to just the municipal website, many services that are put out to bid will not reach as wide an audience and could result in less competition and higher costs for many of the services that our local municipalities contract out to private businesses.

We, the state's newspaper publishers, through a partnership with the Maine Press Association, already publish every public notice in the state at [mainenotices.com](http://mainenotices.com). This partnership ensures the widest audience for public notices.

Broadband access and accessibility of public notices are also of concern, especially in rural areas and for our low-income citizens. A printed newspaper continues to be the easiest and most affordable way for local governments to reach its citizens.

The ability to change and manipulate digital information is also worrisome. Things like back-dating a public notice or altering the details within the notice after publication can be done easily when the local government is also the publisher of the notices.

Thank you,



Chris Crockett, Publisher  
*The Ellsworth American, Courier-Gazette, Mount Desert Islander, The Republican Journal, Camden Herald and the Free Press.*