

Colleen Brown
Whiting
LD 2042

To the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government,
I am writing as a Maine resident and taxpayer in opposition to LD 2042, An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper.

While I personally use the internet and prefer to access information online, I know that many people in my community do not. In rural Maine especially, reliable broadband is not universal, and many residents, particularly seniors, still depend on newspapers for official notices. Eliminating newspaper publication would not modernize public notice. It would restrict it.

Legal notices are not just announcements. They are a safeguard. Newspapers provide an independent, verifiable, and archived record of government actions. Once notices are moved solely to municipal websites or social media, the town itself controls the platform, the visibility, and even whether the notice remains available. That creates the risk that notices can be buried, changed, or quietly removed, whether intentionally or not.

Public notice laws exist so citizens have a fair chance to know about budget hearings, zoning changes, tax decisions, and land use actions before they happen. These are some of the most impactful decisions a town makes. Reducing or weakening the way those notices are delivered does not serve transparency. It undermines it.

In communities like mine, people do not spend their days checking town websites or Facebook pages to see if something important has been posted. Newspapers provide a centralized, consistent place where legal notices are expected and can be found by anyone, regardless of their access to technology.

If the goal is to modernize, the answer is to require both digital and print notice, not to eliminate independent public notice altogether. Maine should be expanding access to information, not narrowing it.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to oppose LD 2042.

Thank you for considering my testimony.