



Town of Northport

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A community of neighbors, a tradition of caring since 1796

Testimony of the Town of Northport In Opposition to LD 2042 -- An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper

January 20, 2026

Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government, my name is James Kossuth, the Town Administrator for the Town of Northport, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Town in opposition to LD 2042, An Act to Eliminate the Requirement for Municipalities to Provide Public Notice in a Newspaper.

In 2026, local newspapers still provide an important service to our communities by keeping residents abreast of local news and events, including public hearings, town meetings, and other municipal events that have direct legal impact on residents. The revenue that newspapers receive from municipal notices helps them continue to provide that service, as well as others, at a time when newspapers are closing, consolidating, and sometimes creating news deserts. Online news aggregators and websites like Reddit and Facebook do not replicate the quality and accountability of newspaper journalism. Newspapers are, in many respects, a public good that municipalities should continue to support. (Many municipalities make donations to local social services organizations, and Northport considers the cost of publishing notice in newspapers to be similar to that.)

I understand that not everyone reads the legal notices in the back of the paper. I do, however, and not just because I have nothing better to do with my time. Our local weekly paper covers Knox and Waldo counties, with occasional spillover from Lincoln and Hancock. I find useful information in the legal notices about matters in nearby municipalities. I can then follow up with staff in those municipalities to learn more. However, if a municipality published that information solely on its website or Facebook page, I would not come across it as easily (nor, I suspect, would many residents of that town or others interested in the content of a particular notice).

Publishing notices in the newspaper, then, allows serendipity to play a role in the lives of municipal officials and others reading the newspaper. (Even if they only read the paper online; the notices are still there.)

I do recognize that parts of Maine may already lack local newspapers, and instead have to rely on the Portland Press Herald or Bangor Daily News as their "local" paper, and that those

papers have higher rates for publishing notices. In fairness to municipalities already in that situation, Northport would support an amendment to the bill that would allow towns not currently served by a local newspaper to skip publishing in some big daily paper at high rates, but which still requires municipalities that are served by local papers to publish notice in that paper. The bill would have to define local paper, something along the lines of "a newspaper with a predominantly local news focus, covering mostly the news of nearby municipalities, and which may be published entirely online."

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on LD2042. I hope these comments are helpful.