



Town of Vinalhaven
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January 21, 2026

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Marjorie E. Stratton, and I am the Town Manager representing the Town of Vinalhaven. I am writing to you today to urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on **LD 2158, An Act to Address Vacancies on the Knox County Budget Committee.**

I am submitting this testimony not just as a resident, but as one of the few town members who cannot complete their budget due to the paralysis of government.

The Knox County Budget Committee is supposed to have nine members. Currently, they only have four. Under the Knox County Charter, they need a quorum of five members to conduct *any* official business. This includes the business of appointing new members to fill vacancies. This bill acts as the "key" to unlock that door, allowing the County Commissioners to temporarily appoint members so they can get back to work.

The towns of Knox County rely on this committee to provide fiscal oversight and ensure tax dollars are spent efficiently. Currently, because of the lack of a quorum to meet or fill vacancies, our towns have effectively lost their seat at the table. This situation leaves municipal taxpayers without their Charter-mandated check on county spending.

Municipal officials need a predictable, transparent county assessment to set their own town budgets and mill rates. The current paralysis creates unnecessary uncertainty for every town in the county. If the Budget Committee cannot function, the budget process stalls, complicating financial planning for our local governments.

LD 2158 is the only viable path to restore this representation. By allowing the vacancies to be filled, you are ensuring that the towns of Knox County once again have a functioning body to protect their financial interests.

I respectfully urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2158.

Regards,

Marjorie E. Stratton, Town Manager
Vinalhaven, Maine
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