

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

My name is Michael Schultz and I am the Acting County Administrator for Knox County. 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**.

Our committee is supposed to have nine members. Currently, we only have four. Under the Knox County Charter, we need a quorum of five members to conduct *any* official business. This includes the business of appointing new members to fill vacancies.

We lack a quorum, and cannot appoint new members without one. This bill acts as the "key" to unlock that door, allowing the County Commissioners to temporarily appoint members so we can get back to work.

Because of this technical paralysis, we have been unable to fulfill our statutory duty to review and approve the 2026 Knox County Budget. This isn't just administrative paperwork; this delay impacts real services. The Sheriff's Office, Dispatch, the Jail, and the Airport rely on a timely budget to operate effectively. Operating on a stalled or interim budget creates uncertainty and potentially harms the public safety services our constituents rely on.

The Budget Committee exists to provide citizen oversight on county spending—a vital check and balance on the Commissioners. Right now, that oversight is nonexistent because our hands are tied. Passing LD 2158 is a restoration of democracy. It allows us to seat members so that the people of Knox County once again have a voice in how their tax dollars are spent.

We are ready and willing to do the work we were elected to do, but we need the Legislature's help to untie this knot. Please pass this emergency legislation so we can convene a quorum, pass a budget, and serve our neighbors.

Thank you for your time and I vote to SUPPORT this matter.

Regards,

Michael Schultz
Town of Hope
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