



TO: The Honorable Senator Ned Claxton
The Honorable Representative Danny Martin, Co-chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

DATE: February 11, 2019

RE: LD 257 An Act to Ensure That the Legislature Has the Information Necessary To
Do the Work of the People of Maine

My name is Polly Ward. I'm a resident of Yarmouth. I am here today as a volunteer representing the members of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League supports LD 257 An Act to Ensure That the Legislature Has the Information Necessary To Do the Work of the People of Maine

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working since 1920 to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

LD 257 would create a new subsection in Title 5, Administrative Procedures and Services of the Maine Statutes, Chapter 555, Interbranch Communication and Coordination, to prohibit the Governor from limiting access to department commissioners and other executive branch personnel when the Legislature is seeking information necessary for it to carry out its responsibilities.

The League supports this proposal. We believe that democratic government depends on transparency at all levels of government. Without question, the Legislature must have access to commissioners and executive branch personnel in order to make informed decisions about government operations for which it has oversight. It is for legislators to determine what information they need to do their jobs.

We would always expect that the executive branch would be fully cooperative with legislators' requests for commissioners and executive branch personnel to appear before them, whether to testify on a piece of legislation or to willingly provide requested information, as long as reasonable notice is given. Both the Legislature and the executive branch agencies benefit from

this open exchange of information – the Legislature by having all the information it needs to make sound public policy and the executive branch agencies as they work to implement enacted public policies. Open communication during this process makes all parties better able to do a good job for the people of Maine.

Accountability to the people of Maine is one of the most important responsibilities of the executive branch and working with the elected representatives of the people in the Legislature is critical to fulfilling this responsibility.

This bill helps ensure the transparency and accountability upon which democratic government depends. We encourage the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 257.