

124th Legislature

Senate of  
Maine

Senate District 15

**Senator Deborah L. Simpson**  
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Testimony of Senator Deborah Simpson in Support of L.D. 1353, "An Act  
Regarding Salary Information for Public Employees," April 30, 2009

Good afternoon Senator Bliss, Representative Priest, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Deborah Simpson, and I am appearing before you today to testify in support of L.D. 1353, "An Act Regarding Salary Information for Public Employees."

I am an advocate for open government generally, but question why everyone needs to know what each government worker earns by name. In my eight years of service working on department budgets it has never been necessary to know who worked in the positions we looked at, only the job titles and salaries. I have worked very hard to increase access to information for the public serving on the right to know committee for the last four years, fighting to keep public notice in the local paper so everyone can track what the government is doing. Elected officials and political appointees salaries must remain public but to say that the janitor and plow guy have no privacy rights is troubling to me. The transparency in the salary for those positions should continue, just the individual's names should disappear.

In cosponsoring this bill my intent was to suggest that the committee work to improve and generally narrow its scope. I believe there is a balance between personal privacy and public accountability, and I am confident that the committee can strike that balance.

Thank you very much for your consideration.