

Statement of Rep. Thomas Oppel, Grafton 9

House Election Committee

1/20/26 - HB 1031

Chairman Berry, Ranking Member Lane and Honorable Members of the House Election Committee.

For the record, I am Thomas Oppel, Representative for Grafton District 9, encompassing the towns of Canaan, Dorchester & Orange.

I am a co-sponsor of House Bill 1031 and I urge this committee to report it out to the full House as Ought to Pass.

It is an unfortunate reality that we live in an era of increasing political violence. This bill is a consequence of that reality in permitting candidates, elected officials to use up to \$3,000 of campaign funds to pay for reasonable security costs for themselves, their families, and employees of a candidate's campaign or the state officeholder's office.

Running for and serving in public office already imposes its own set of demands on the time and finances of those willing to offer themselves to assist in the proper functioning of our democracy. And while there have always been risks, the cost to provide reasonable protections should not be an added to those demands.

As such, I urge this committee to report this bill to the full House with a favorable motion of Ought to Pass.