



March 6, 2023

Chair Flexer, Chair Blumenthal and members of the GAE Committee. My name is Brian Anderson. I am a legislative director for Council 4 AFSCME which represents 30,000 public and private employees.

Our union supports **Senate Bill 1157, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEES OF PUBLIC AGENCIES.** Several of our administrative and clerical members work for agencies mentioned in this bill.

Our union acknowledges the sad reality that threats and violence against public employees have increased in recent years. Several of our members have experienced harassment from so-called “sovereign citizens” and other people with extreme political views. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace cited in its recent congressional testimony that “Acceptance of political violence has been rising sharply over the past five years. The acceleration in violent incidents from 2016 to 2020 – and their probable fall in 2021 – does not mean the threat has receded. Instead, it tells us something about the nature of the threat and its causes. The trends we see in the spring of 2022 are indicative of violent behavior in the U.S. that can be motivated spontaneously by social events and can be directed purposefully for political goals. Politically-catalyzed violence should be expected to rise with the election calendar and to fall between campaigns.”

Our union does not see any useful or beneficial purpose for our state employee members’ home addresses or information to be given to the public. It is quite easy to contact our members at their jobs. There is a public good to protecting state employees from harassment. There is no public good to exposing them to it.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions.