



House Bill 5343

AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPORTING OF ADVERTISING PURCHASED BY THE STATE

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services

Governmental Administration and Elections Committee

March 4, 2026

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. I am Michelle Gilman, Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to **HB 5343: An Act Concerning the Reporting of Advertising Purchased by the State**.

DAS appreciates and understands the legislature's interest in transparency regarding state advertising expenditures. However, we respectfully submit that the reporting requirements contemplated in this bill would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement under the current structure by which the state procures and places advertising.

To ensure compliance with state statutes governing competitive bidding and to maintain a level playing field for small businesses, DAS established Contract [#24PSX0020](#) for Media, Marketing and Public Relations Services. This statewide contract provides a compliant and efficient vehicle through which most state agencies, many municipalities, and many not-for-profit entities conduct advertising and public outreach campaigns.

Under this structure, agencies follow the prescribed competitive quote process and award work to the vendor offering the greatest value. The awarded vendor, typically a marketing, public relations, or communications firm, then manages the campaign. That vendor subcontracts with a variety of media outlets and platforms to place advertisements, including newspapers, digital platforms, social media companies, radio, television, over-the-top (OTT) providers (deliver content directly to viewers via the internet and not cable), and out-of-home vendors such as billboard services.

Importantly, payments are structured so that the prime contractor pays the media outlets directly and then invoices the agency. The agency, in turn, pays the prime contractor, not the individual media platforms. As a result, the state's financial systems do not capture expenditures at the level of granularity contemplated in HB 5343.

To produce a reasonably accurate report as proposed in this legislation, each agency would be required to manually review and dissect individual invoices to extract and categorize underlying media placement costs. This would be a highly manual, time-consuming, and resource-intensive process. We do not believe this work could be accomplished within existing appropriations or staffing levels. It would impose a significant administrative burden not only on DAS, but on our sister agencies across state government.

While we appreciate the legislature's inclusion of language contemplating assistance from institutions of higher education as neutral third parties, DAS has not received any volunteer offers to provide such services. Moreover, even if such assistance were available, agencies would still be responsible for gathering and organizing the underlying documentation. As such, we do not believe this provision would meaningfully reduce the workload or fiscal impact on state agencies.

For these reasons, DAS respectfully opposes HB 5343 as currently drafted.

We remain committed to transparency and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee to explore alternative approaches that balance transparency objectives with operational feasibility and fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for your consideration.