



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: March 22, 2023

RE: LD 1038 - An Act to Reinstate Plurality Voting by Repealing the Ranked-choice Voting Laws

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica.

My name is Will Hayward. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Advocacy Program Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1038, An Act to Reinstate Plurality Voting by Repealing the Ranked-choice Voting Laws.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is Maine's leading voice for a wide array of measures that would improve and strengthen our democratic process, including ranked choice voting.

As you heard last week when we testified against LD 768, the League supports ranked-choice voting (RCV) as a voting method to give voters meaningful choices, eliminate spoilers, and reduce negative campaigning.

In 2022 Maine successfully conducted ranked choice elections for the third consecutive election cycle. What we see is clear: a majority of voters like RCV and want it to continue to be a feature of Maine elections.

Back in 2018 when RCV was first used in Maine opponents predicted voter confusion and decreased participation. None of that happened. Polls and surveys of voters have consistently shown that they find it clear, easy, and empowering. There is no evidence of a decrease in turnout or an increase in voter errors. Mainers have adapted to RCV.

We believe the Legislature should respect the will of Maine voters, who have twice in recent years affirmed their support for ranked-choice voting at the ballot box. Even if you disapprove of RCV, you should respect the constitutional rights of a majority of Maine citizens to enact laws by petition. The RCV law was affirmed by a majority of Maine voters twice at the polls, and it deserves your respect. But finally, if you won't grant even that, you should oppose this resolution as a practical matter: it's one thing to change the law; it's another thing to flip-flop back and forth creating disruption to the process, to campaigns, and to the voters for no good reason.

We urge this committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1038.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.