



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 1032 RESOLUTION Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Specify the Qualifications of Electors

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Will Hayward. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as Advocacy Program Coordinator on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League of Women Voters is a consensus-based membership organization. At this time, we have no position on the merits of allowing non-citizens to vote in local elections. Therefore, I am testifying neither for nor against LD 1032.

At present, both the Constitution of Maine¹ —as to state elections — and Maine law² —as to local elections — provide that voters shall be citizens of the United States. Maine law appears to be clear on the qualifications of electors, meaning those who are eligible to vote in elections. The broader text of LD 1032 suggests that the focus of the proposed Resolution is to mandate in the Maine Constitution that non-citizens may not vote in county, municipal, or other local elections in the state.

Today, citizenship is a requirement of both federal elections and state elections in all 50 states. A small number of localities in certain states, such as Maryland and Vermont, permit certain non-citizens to vote in some local elections. In Maine, our law does not afford non-citizens the right to vote in local elections, nor is the League aware of any pending measures that would seek to authorize it. For now, the merits of whether, and under what circumstances, non-citizens should be granted a limited right to vote in local elections remains largely a hypothetical issue for future discussion and consideration.

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

¹ Art. II, sec. 1

² 21-A M.R.S.A. sec. 111(1)