



TO: The Honorable Louis Luchini  
The Honorable Chris Caiazzo, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: February 3rd, 2021

RE: **An Act To Facilitate Fair Ballot Representation for All Candidates By Allowing a Candidate's Nickname To Appear on the Ballot**

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Good morning Senator Luchini and Representative Caiazzo.

My name is Anna Kellar. I'm a resident of Portland. I am here today as the Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 109.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a nonpartisan political organization that has been working for over 100 years to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League's support of this bill rests in the public interest that it serves. We believe voters benefit when there is clarity about who's who on their ballot. If a candidate is known by a name other than their legal name, LD 109 allows that name to appear on the ballot.

The bill requires the candidate to declare to the Secretary of State that the "nickname" is the name by which they are known. It also requires the Secretary of State to place the "nickname" in quotation marks with their legal last name and first and middle initials or name(s). We believe those two provisions are adequate to ensure that the law will be used as intended and not for any nefarious purpose. Voters will be aware that the candidate is not using their legal name. Candidates may use their usual name in their campaign without the additional burden of explaining to supportive voters why they must choose an unfamiliar name in order to vote for them.

The only suggestion we have is to change the word "nickname" to "a familiar name" in the title and the bill. "Nickname" implies a term of endearment, affection, or description, and in fact there are many reasons why people go by a name other than their legal name. We don't see a public interest in limiting the reach of this bill to the narrow interpretation that "nickname" could imply.

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