



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

DATE: April 1, 2019

RE: LD 1332 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require State and Congressional Elections To Be Decided by a Plurality of Votes Cast

Good morning. My name is Bob Howe. I'm the lobbyist for the League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME). The League of Women Voters of Maine submits the following testimony opposed to LD 1332.

Beginning in 2008--just over ten years ago--the League undertook a study of election methods, and in March, 2011, the LWVME issued its policy position supporting ranked choice voting in Maine. In doing so, we joined other state Leagues around the country (MN, SC, CA, WA, MA, VT, AZ, FL and others) in endorsing ranked choice voting. You can read the background material from that study at www.lwvme.org/IRV.html. We have been working to enact RCV in Maine ever since. We support RCV because it:

- ✓ Gives voters more meaningful choices: Ranked choice voting allows candidates from outside the two major parties to compete and supports a diversity of views.
- ✓ Eliminates spoilers and strategic voting: Ranked choice voting allows voters to support their favorite candidate without worrying that they might split their votes with like-minded voters and unintentionally help elect the candidate they like the least.
- ✓ Reduces negative campaigning: Voters are less likely to rank a candidate highly who is negative toward their preferred candidate.
- ✓ Reduces the influence of money in politics: By making negative advertising less effective, ranked choice voting reduces the need for, and influence of, money in politics.

This resolution would have the effect of barring RCV in primary and general elections for state and federal offices where it is now permitted. Leaving aside for a moment the appropriateness of regulating primary elections in the Constitution, we oppose this resolution firstly because we believe in the benefits of RCV as enumerated above. But even if you disapprove of RCV, you should oppose this bill if you respect the constitutional rights of Maine citizens to enact laws by petition. The RCV law, recently enacted and reaffirmed by a majority of Maine voters twice at the polls, 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.

If you're looking for a citizen-enacted law to overturn we urge your attention to one of more long standing which has utterly failed to deliver: term limits.

In the meantime, we urge you vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 1332.