



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

DATE: April 10, 2019

RE: LD 1213 – An Act To Repeal the Ranked-choice Voting Law

LD 1447 – An Act To Simplify Voting in Maine by Placing a Moratorium on
Ranked-choice Voting

LD 1454 – An Act Concerning Elections in Maine Congressional Districts

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 1213, LD 1447, and LD 1454. My name is John Brautigam. I am here today as Legal Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor for the League of Women Voters of Maine.

As we noted earlier this morning, a majority of voters has taken a stand in favor of ranked choice voting on two occasions. Each of these bills would, in different ways, deny the voters what they have already approved. Ranked choice voting worked well in 2018, and public support remains strong. There is no reason to repeal or weaken the law.

Let me speak directly to the folks who supported Congressman Poliquin in his reelection bid last year. It is only natural to blame the outcome on ranked choice voting, and it's understandable to respond by trying to undo the law. But that would be short-sighted. In any election system, there will be winners and losers. At the same time, there is no reason to believe that Rep. Poliquin would have won under a plurality system, any more than there is any reason to believe that President Trump would have lost without the Electoral College. Those weren't the rules in place during those elections. Candidates would have behaved differently. Voters would have behaved differently, and to think otherwise is just speculation. Sometimes RCV will seem to help your chosen candidate, and sometimes it will seem to help the opponent. That is inevitable. But with RCV the voters are always the winners, year in and year out, because their voice is given the top priority. That is why we support RCV.

We ask you not to roll back RCV on the basis of one election cycle. Please vote ought not to pass on these three bills. Thank you.