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March 28, 2023

*Testimony of Rep. Sean Paulhus presenting
LD 86, An Act to Restore the Former State of Maine Flag
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government*

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and esteemed colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Sean Paulhus, Representative for House District 50 which includes the city of Bath. I am here to very proudly present **LD 86, An Act to Restore the Former State of Maine Flag**.

Some of you may recognize this bill as one that has come before the committee in the past. This proposal was first introduced by Representative Janice Cooper of Yarmouth in the 129th Legislature who spoke eloquently and persuasively on the merits of reviving what is known colloquially as the original Maine flag. While her initial proposal was ultimately unsuccessful, it was a catalyst for a movement that has only gained momentum in recent years.

Mainers everywhere have brought this design back to prominence and popularity. Its unique and instantly recognizable design, also referred to as the “Polaris and pine” or “the star and pine,” now represents a symbol of pride, a symbol of place and a symbol of home to people across our state.

Politically speaking, this flag has brought people with all kinds of differing views together including Senator Susan Collins and Secretary of State Shenna Bellows who both regularly sported original Maine state flag face coverings throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is because our original flag embodies our Dirigo motto, it is pure Maine and cannot be mistaken for any other state’s flag. In fact, flag design experts, also known as “vexilologists”, agree. The best flags tend to stand out and are usually a significant departure from flag-versions of official seals. Our current flag is easily lost in a crowd of other states’ flags that are similarly marked by ornate, overcrowded seals.

Mainers deserve a flag that represents our values, our culture and our people and the original state flag does this far better than the current flag. We have so much to be proud of. It’s time we add our official state flag to that list.

In passing this bill, we would be both honoring our history and heritage and doing something that many Mainers have been asking for for years. Let’s listen to them this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. I would be happy to answer any questions.