



TO: The Honorable Cathy Breen
The Honorable Teresa Pierce, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

The Honorable Senator Joseph Baldacci Co-Chair
The Honorable Ann Matlack Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

DATE: March 7, 2022

RE: LD 1995, Supplemental Budget Bill – Office of the Secretary of State

Good morning, Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, Senator Baldacci, and Representative Matlack.

My name is Will Hayward. I am here today as the Advocacy Program Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying with respect to the portion of LD 1995 concerning the budget for the Secretary of State.

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.

We urge you to include funding for LD 1155, An Act To Require Election Transparency and Audits, in the forthcoming Supplemental Budget. This bill, which directs the Secretary of State to design, pilot and implement a program of post-election audits, received a strong, bipartisan vote in the First Session of this Legislature. The bill also includes provisions requiring opportunities for public oversight throughout the election process in order to enhance public confidence in our nonpartisan, professional election officials, as well as the election outcomes they report. Maine must embrace – and fund – this important, bipartisan, election security legislation.

Post-election audits are an increasingly critical tool in today's overheated elections environment, and are now considered best practice. They are endorsed by nonpartisan organizations such as the League of Women Voters, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Brennan Center for Justice. In Maine, this bill has been endorsed by the Mainers for Modern Elections coalition, a coalition of organizations that support accessible, secure, and modern elections. Although considered a state with strong election laws and processes, Maine lags when it comes to election audits. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 38 states and DC require a post-election audit and two others have statutory

requirements to conduct risk-limiting audit pilots. It is vital that Maine augments its already strong election laws with a robust post-election audit.

A newly created audit program would provide data and expanded resources to support high quality election administration, not only to the Elections Division of the department, but also to municipal elections officials around the state. This last point is critical. We hear time and time again that what our local election administrators need most is resources provided by state election officials. Funding LD 1155 would help advance that goal.

The State's election administration functions have been chronically under-resourced for many years. What was adequate resourcing 25 years ago is no longer adequate today. The field of elections administration is not what it was then. The technology has changed, the political pressures have changed, the cyber and other threats have changed. The level of expertise required to perform these functions has changed. We must respond to this changing landscape with additional resources if we hope to remain a national leader in elections administration. We encourage full funding of this initiative, and encourage the Legislature to consider additional funding for the Elections Division.

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