

Testimony in Support of LD 86 An Act to Restore the Former State of Maine Flag

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding LD 86.

Vexillology is the scientific study of the history, symbolism, and usage of flags. The North American Vexillological Association conducted an opinion survey in 2002 of State, Territorial, and Provincial flags of North America. Maine's current flag design came in 60th out of 72.

The North American Vexillological Association also highlights five key points of flag design compiled by Ted Kaye and twenty other expert vexillologists in the publication *Good Flag, Bad Flag*. They are as follows:

1. **Keep It Simple:** The flag should be so simple that a child can draw it from memory.
2. **Use Meaningful Symbolism:** The flag's images, colors, or patterns should relate to what it symbolizes.
3. **Use 2 or 3 Basic Colors:** Limit the number of colors on the flag to three which contrast well and come from the standard color set.
4. **No Lettering or Seals:** Never use writing of any kind or an organization's seal.
5. **Be Distinctive or Be Related:** Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections.

When Old Town, Maine was choosing their municipal flag in 2021, they highlighted the importance of these principles stating in a resolution: "The simplicity of the design is intentional. The flag has three colors, one central charge, and little else. At once, the design looks old and new. The charge has a deep meaning, and it will be instantly recognizable to Mainers as Old Town's flag. We believe this symbol has the ability to represent the past, present, and future citizens of Old Town."¹

Representative Palhaus phrased it best in his testimony:

"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.

I agree with Representative Palhaus and believe that the simplicity and meaningful symbolism of the former state flag is better representative of the beauty and uniqueness of the State of Maine

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¹ City Of Old Town, "Resolution Relating to: ADOPTION OF THE OFFICIAL FLAG AND ARMS OF THE CITY OF OLD TOWN, MAINE," 2021.