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*Testimony of Representative Daniel Sayre, in support of*

**LD 1578, An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote**

*Before the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am Representative Daniel Sayre of Kennebunk, and I am speaking in support of LD 1578, *An Act to Adopt an Interstate Compact to Elect the President of the United States by National Popular Vote*.

This bill will add Maine to a group of states that have agreed to a compact that will apply the one-person/one-vote principle to Presidential elections. It ensures that each of our votes counts equally, regardless of party affiliation and geography.

While most Americans today agree that each adult citizen should be entitled to vote and to have their vote count equally, that has not always been the case. Over the course of our history, access to voting rights has expanded dramatically. At the time of ratification of the constitution, it has been estimated that only 6% of citizens were entitled to vote – white males who met property ownership and other requirements. It is worth noting that it would have been the will of the framers to deny the franchise to both chairs of this committee. I state this as a reminder that arguments about what the founders or framers intended have long since been superseded through constitutional amendments and state laws. The goal of this long chain of changes has been to expand democracy – extending the right to vote from the privileged few to all qualified adult citizens. And I think that everyone in this room agrees that this has been a positive change. We agree that democracy is a bedrock of our republic, even though we know that most founders did not believe that to be true.

What we have before us is the proposal to make another change in the progression toward democracy - giving equal voice to each voter in presidential elections. This bill will add Maine to an existing compact of states that agree to award their electors to the candidate who receives the most votes for President in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This will ensure that the popular choice – the people’s choice – will attain the presidency.

It is important to note that it is within the discretion of the State of Maine to do this.

The U.S. Constitution (Article II) gives the states exclusive control over the choice of method of awarding their electoral votes—thereby giving the states a built-in way to reform the system.

“Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors....” This bill will simply add a condition to how Maine awards its electors.

It is also important to note that this in no way disenfranchises any voter. It equally enfranchises all voters. No longer will we be beholden to the tyranny of a few thousand “swing voters” in “swing states” who, under the current system, determine the outcome of Presidential elections regardless of how tens of millions of the rest of us vote.

I thank you for your consideration, and I will be happy to address any questions you might have.