



TO: The Honorable Tim Nangle
The Honorable Holly Stover, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

DATE: February 6, 2024

RE: LD 1432, An Act to Amend the Law Governing Racial Impact Statements
LD 1948, An Act to Amend the State's Data Governance Program Regarding Proprietary Data

Good afternoon Senator Nangle and Representative Stover.

My name is Ann Luther. I'm a resident of Trenton. I am here today as a volunteer on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Maine. I am testifying in support of LD 1432, An Act to Amend the Law Governing Racial Impact Statements, and LD 1948, An Act to Amend the State's Data Governance Program Regarding Proprietary Data.

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.

The League believes in a just and equitable society, and we believe in the power of the people, working over the long arc of history, to achieve that goal through democratic self-governance. We believe in evidence-based policy-making. With these core values in mind, the League supported two critical laws in the 130th Legislature to implement racial impact statements and improve the state's data and analysis capabilities through a data governance program. Both LD 1432 and LD 1948 are key next steps to ensure that the policy goals passed in the previous Legislature are fully implemented. Racial impact statements are a vital tool to help provide legislators with data and analysis about the racial impacts of policies being considered in order to help make fully informed decisions. The League believes that the legislative process best serves the public when legislators have all necessary information at their disposal, and racial impact statements help achieve that.

Together, LD 1432 and 1948 provide resources and a clear policy roadmap to improve data collection, sharing, and analysis across Maine state government. These bills affirm the state's commitment to supporting the racial impact statement process and to continuing to improve data sharing and analysis through the state's data governance program. We know that racial impact statements could be improved through increased capacity and better data collection, sharing, and analysis. These bills help fulfill these goals and ultimately help lawmakers make the best, most informed policy they can. Both of these bills deserve your support.

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