



Maine Education Association

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March 6, 2024

Re: LD 2232

Senator Hickman, Representative Supika, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Ben Grant and I am the General Counsel of the Maine Education Association. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators in our Maine system of public education, in pre-K-12 schools as well as in our institutions of higher education, and both retired and aspiring educators.

I am here to testify in opposition to LD 2232. While MEA has long stood behind the notion that Citizens United was a bad decision and has produced significant negative impacts on elections, we oppose this bill because of the cynical way it purports to address the issue. While we all battle the erosion of campaign finance regulation, we all must also battle the seemingly endless rise in cynicism among the citizenry about the whole business of politics and government. Far too often, like in this case, that cynicism is justified.

What I mean by this is that we are once again facing the prospect of the voters of Maine being used as pawns in a legal strategy. If this matter moves forward, the voters are going to be asked to vote for something that even the proponents agree is blatantly unconstitutional – all for the purpose of ginning up a case to bring back to the Courts. Measures like this are superficially very popular, so we can all expect it to pass at the ballot box. But, like the ban on foreign spending or even the original RCV question, under the surface are serious constitutional problems. The reason this is important is because the referendum process has the added effect of ratcheting up public expectations about actually getting the result the people voted to implement. How many times are we going to put a question before the people that we know they cannot have – even with a “yes” vote? How much more cynicism are we willing to intentionally sew?

This is as good a time as any to say “Stop” – and so the MEA urges the Committee to take whatever steps necessary to prevent this measure from going to the ballot.

Thank you,

Ben Grant
General Counsel, MEA

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