

James Waite  
OLD ORCHARD BEACH  
LD 234

I'm contacting you to voice my support for LD 234 An Act to Eliminate Ranked-choice Voting.

I have always been satisfied with our plurality voting system. Ranked-choice voting has left me feeling disenfranchised and I believe it suppresses the vote.

RCV exhausts ballots, removing voters from the final vote tally. In doing so, exhausted ballots are no longer counted in the denominator of votes required to achieve a majority in the final round. In essence, these votes are thrown away; it's like the voter never showed up on Election Day. In Maine's Second Congressional District race in the 2018 midterm elections, 8,253 votes were not counted in the final round because they were exhausted after the first round of counting. Jared Golden achieved the majority required to win in the second round of the RCV election with only 142,440 votes, or 49.18 percent of the total votes cast on Election Day. In other words, RCV did not result in a true majority victory.

Contrary to what proponents of RCV have suggested, the 2018 race in the Second Congressional District did not benefit third party candidates. In the first round, 23,427 votes were cast for independent candidates Tiffany Bond and William Hoar, which is approximately 8% of the first round of voting. Roughly 35% of these votes were exhausted after the first round and both third party candidates were eliminated after the first round, leaving a Democrat and a Republican remaining in the race. It is unclear if RCV will ever benefit third party candidates in the future, but this limited sample size suggests it's unlikely to do so.

Lastly, RCV has done nothing to improve civility in politics, another unfounded claim made by the supporters of RCV. The gubernatorial primary elections last June were nasty on both sides of the aisle and a record amount was spent on the 2018 CD2 race between Jared Golden and Bruce Poliquin - \$17 million more than the previous race between Poliquin and Emily Cain. As seen in the gubernatorial primaries, if anything, RCV gives trailing candidates more incentive to attack the perceived frontrunner of the race for the purpose of reducing their first-round vote totals. The smaller the margin between first and second place in the first round, and assuming no majority is reached, the greater chance trailing candidates have to overcome the leader in subsequent rounds. This makes knocking down the frontrunner a priority for each campaign.

I urge the committee to vote "Ought To Pass" on LD 234