

Dear Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

We would like to submit testimony supporting the new bill that would repeal the state's controversial ranked choice voting (RCV) system, LD 234 — *An Act to Eliminate Ranked-Choice Voting* .

I am so relieved that our legislators (Rep. Richard H. Campbell (R-Orrington), Rep. Amy Bradstreet Arata (R-New Gloucester), Rep. Irene A. Gifford (R-Lincoln), Rep. Randall Adam Greenwood (R-Wales), Rep. Abigail W. Griffin (R-Levant), Rep. Shelley Rudnicki (R-Fairfield), Rep. Michael Soboleski (R-Phillips), and Rep. Tiffany Strout (R-Harrington), have taken the step to repeal this awkward, confusing and unconstitutional system of voting.

There are so many reasons that Ranked Choice Voting should be eliminated. First, Ranked Choice Voting takes longer. It is not acceptable, in this day and age, that Mainers can't know the results of their elections for several days after the election. This system takes more steps, more staff and complicated procedures just to have an election. Ranked-choice voting can lead to errors and delayed results lasting days, if not weeks. Ranked-choice voting guarantees multiple rounds of ballot counting if no candidate originally receives a majority of the vote. This process delays results, which leads to voter frustration and lowers confidence in election results, and suspicions of voter fraud.

Ranked Choice Voting is also more complicated. People who take the time to vote should be presented with a ballot that is easy to follow and comprehend, but ranked-choice voting ballots are neither. They are likely to both confuse the electorate and increase the likelihood of voter error. Voters are forced to vote for candidates they dislike and who hold policy positions they oppose, or they risk trashing their vote. It even requires candidates to vote for their opponents to avoid this risk.

Next, it destroys transparency. Ranked Choice Voting elections that require multiple rounds of tabulation rely on computers to make adjustments, or discard, ballots in each round. There is no way to quickly confirm the accuracy of the computer processes involved. Mainers deserve clear, transparent processes in their elections, with no questions about the results.

Under ranked-choice voting, candidates with the most votes often lose, while those with less support end up winning. For centuries in this country, election winners were the ones who received the most votes—simple. Ranked-choice voting is anything but simple and results in confusing outcomes. This happened in Maine in 2018 when the candidate who won the most votes and who would have been declared the winner, was eliminated after Ranked Choice Voting kicked in. This has also happened in Alaska in 2021 and in a municipal election in Portland, Maine in 2021. This is an injustice.

States are turning against Ranked Choice Voting all over the country. Legislators who care deeply about the integrity of elections and protecting the votes of their citizens

have been instituting statewide bans of ranked-choice voting. Florida, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Tennessee have all banned ranked-choice voting since 2022. Maine and Alaska are the ONLY states that still used this system. It has a bad track record.

Finally, Ranked Choice Voting has been deemed unconstitutional by the Maine Supreme Court. Our Maine Constitution requires a "plurality of votes". We have decided elections by this standard since the beginning of our country. It is simply common sense that the person with the most votes wins. It is time to put Maine back on track and repeal Ranked Choice Voting. Please advance this bill and prove that you are on the side of Maine voters and true democracy.

Thank you,

Ralph and Karen Hutchinson