

To: State and Local Government Committee
From: Cole Cochrane, MYCJ
Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 236, An Act to Provide
Legislative Oversight of the Rule-making Petition Process



Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and the esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Cole Cochrane, and I am presenting testimony on behalf of Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ) in opposition to LD 236, An Act to Provide Legislative Oversight of the Rule-making Petition Process.

This legislation is an infringement on public participation in our democracy, *regardless of political interests or background*. The rule-making petition process serves as a bulwark for public interest, an opportunity for the public to represent themselves in policymaking aside from our legislators. It provides citizens a reprieve from the petty and oftentimes personal politics of the legislature. As legislators, I am sure you can recall at least one bill you championed in which its failure was rooted in the game of politics, not necessarily in its merits. If not, I commend you greatly for being one of the very few who has not yet experienced that. Political dynamics can be inhibitive of popular change; therefore, it is beneficial to have a route available to citizens to generate change without legislative approval.

Further, it must be clear that Maine Youth for Climate Justice does not condone this **unwarranted expansion of legislative power**. As our generation witnesses the rapid consolidation of power occurring at the federal level, with little regard for the integrity of our institutions and separation of powers, now is not the time to follow suit. It is the responsibility of our government and this legislature to preserve the strength of our democratic institutions, especially as it relates to public involvement. This is a self-evident truth which ought to be obliged by the members of this committee.

Although these two brief pages of legislation may seem like some procedural clarification, it is in fact bludgeoning the will of the constituency- *your constituency*. I implore to all of you esteemed members to understand the bipartisan and necessary nature of rejecting LD 236 in its entirety. Thank you for your time and consideration.