



Testimony in Support of LD 775:

“An Act Requiring Voter Approval of Legislative and Gubernatorial Pay Increases”

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and the distinguished members of the Committee On State and Local Government, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony support for LD 775, "An Act Requiring Voter Approval of Legislative and Gubernatorial Pay Increases."

Public service is a noble calling, and those who serve as elected officials deserve fair compensation. However, determining these salaries must be transparent, accountable, and ultimately reflective of the people's will. LD 775 ensures that any future increases in the wages of Maine's governor, senators, and representatives are subject to voter approval, reinforcing a critical principle of democratic governance: elected officials should not have unilateral authority to raise their salaries without direct input from the taxpayers who fund them.

Under current law, legislators and the governor can approve salary increases without a direct mechanism for voter oversight. This practice raises legitimate concerns about self-dealing and conflicts of interest. The passage of LD 775 would provide an essential safeguard by requiring that any legislative or gubernatorial salary increase be placed on the ballot at the next general election, allowing Maine voters to determine whether such increases are warranted.

Furthermore, requiring voter approval of salary increases would encourage elected officials to consider when and why such increases are proposed more carefully. This added level of accountability fosters trust in government and ensures that salary decisions are made with the best interests of Maine taxpayers in mind.

Maine voters deserve a say in spending their tax dollars, particularly when compensating their elected officials. By supporting LD 775, the Legislature can take a meaningful step toward restoring public confidence in state government and ensuring that salary decisions reflect the people's will.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to support LD 775. Thank you for your time and consideration.