

Testimony of Linda Caprara
On Behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce
In Strong Opposition to L.D. 1350, An Act to Ban Corporate Contributions to Candidates.

April 7, 2025

Good Afternoon, Sen. Hickman, Rep. Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. My name is Linda Caprara, I am the Vice President of Advocacy for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. We are testifying in opposition to L.D. 1350, An Act to Ban Corporate Contributions to Candidates.

The bill would amend the campaign finance laws to prohibit a business entity from making contributions to candidates and defines “business entity” to include a firm, partnership, corporation, incorporated association, labor organization or for profit or non-profit organizations.

Maine’s businesses have a right to participate in the political process and support candidates that share their values and vision for Maine’s future. Corporate entities are considered “persons” under the law, including for purposes of political contributions. The legislation is a clear violation to first amendment rights and is unconstitutional. Free speech is protected under the First Amendment in the US Constitution and engagement in the political process has been consistently recognized as a right under the First Amendment. While states have the power to regulate some aspects of political contributions, broadly banning (which is what this bill does) political expression would be legally vulnerable and invite legal challenges.

In Maine we feel confident that there is already an existing political process that is transparent and promotes public accountability, which leads to greater public trust in our elections. Maine law requires public disclosure of contributions with a longstanding, well-organized and very effective system through the Commission on Governmental Ethics. Individuals can go online and find out who has contributed what to any candidate who is not part of the Clean Elections system.

I would be happy to answer any questions.