



April 16, 2025

Testimony from: Eric H. Bronner, Founder & COO, Veterans for All Voters

To: Maine Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

RE: Testimony in Support of ME LD 1422, “AN ACT Regarding Open Primary Elections and Ranked-choice Voting”

Mr. Chairman and Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee Members,

My name is Eric Bronner. I’m a Navy veteran, lifelong Independent voter, and the Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Veterans for All Voters—a nonpartisan, nonprofit community of more than 5,000 veterans and supporters from across the country and across the political spectrum. Our mission is to mobilize veterans to advocate for election innovations that unlock competition, reduce polarization, and promote responsive governance.

I’m writing in strong support of LD 1422 because this legislation reflects the core values that veterans like me swore an oath to defend: fairness, accountability, and a government that truly represents “we the people.” Veterans for All Voters supported the effort to bring semi-open primaries to Maine. This legislation builds upon Maine’s proud tradition of being a national leader in election innovations.

LD 1422 proposes a bold but common-sense reform: allowing all voters—regardless of party affiliation—to participate in a unified primary election, where every candidate appears on the same ballot and the top finishers move on to the general election. Veterans for All Voters agrees with the assessment from the R Street Institute that “there are areas where the bill can and should be improved to better serve voters.” Specifically, there is no need for Maine to move backward by not using ranked-choice voting (RCV) in the presidential election; and, adopting a unified, top-four system would increase voter participation, while limiting confusion and administrative complexity.

In the military, leadership isn’t given—it’s earned. We don’t pick leaders based on affiliation or popularity—we choose them based on who can lead effectively and represent the whole team. This bill brings that same spirit of service and accountability to our elections.

Maine has long been a national leader in voting innovation. From pioneering ranked-choice voting to expanding voter access, the state has shown what it means to put voters first. LD 1422 builds on that legacy by creating a process that removes unnecessary barriers, encourages broader participation, and makes elections more competitive and representative.

This reform also speaks directly to the experience of veterans. Nationally, 55% of post-9/11 veterans identify as independent or unaffiliated. Yet in many places – even in states like Maine, with semi-open primaries—they’re effectively limited from choosing who appears on the general election ballot—despite paying for those elections with their taxes and, in many cases, their service. Veterans don’t ask for special treatment, but we do expect a fair shot. LD 1422 provides that—not just for veterans, but for every Mainer who wants their voice to be fully heard.

By consolidating primaries and leveling the playing field, this legislation will lead to more inclusive campaigns, less toxic partisanship, and outcomes that better reflect the will of the voters. It puts country over party—and that’s exactly what our democracy needs right now.

Veterans for All Voters is proud to support LD 1422, and we urge you to pass this legislation. Together, we can strengthen democracy for the next generation—and ensure that every voter in Maine has a fair and equal say.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Maine.

Respectfully,

/s/ *Eric H. Bronner*

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