

Betsy Williams
Brunswick
LD 1666

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veteran's and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Betsy Williams, and I live in Brunswick. I am writing today in favor of LD 1666 to expand rank choice voting (RVC) to include election of Maine's Governor, State Senators and State Representatives.

Twice in our recent history, Mainers have voted in favor of rank choice voting. I have been among them, for two major reasons, both of which put the voters, not the candidates, first in our elections.

1.RCV allows for a much richer dialogue between candidates, and with the electorate. I have been an active, involved voter for over 50 years and, until Maine's first rank choice primary election in 2018, I have never felt more engaged, better informed and more empowered by my vote. With the knowledge that I would have an opportunity (which I saw as an obligation) to order the candidates from first choice to last, I paid very close attention to everything all of them said. Where differences were clear, my vote was clear. Where differences were nuanced (as they often are) I had a chance to rank highly those two or three who I knew would all work toward what I believed was in the best interest of Maine at the time.

2.RCV eliminates the third-party spoiler problem that has plagued our elections in the past. Voters can support their candidate without worrying that their vote might inadvertently be a vote that supports an opposing candidate. With RVC voters are voting for individuals, not simply a party. I believe this will make our legislature a stronger, more cohesive body. RCV makes voting more meaningful, which encourages greater participation and better representation. Sounds like good democracy to me.

Please vote OTP on LD 1666 and encourage the Maine Supreme Court to reconsider its advisory opinion of eight years ago which prohibited these final state level elections from the benefits afforded voters by rank choice voting.

Thank you.