Testimony for the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs Regarding LD 1666

Craig Hickman, Senate Chair and Laura Supica, House Chair and Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee.

I want to thank the Co-Chairs and the Committee for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 1666, an Act to Include in the Ranked-choice Election Method for General and Special Elections the Offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative and to Make Other Related Changes. My name is Doug Welldon and I'm a year-round resident of the island of Islesboro.

In the elections where Ranked Choice Voting has been used in Maine, the outcomes have provided clarity, and eliminated spoilers and strategic voting. Importantly, it allows voters to support their favorite candidate without worrying that they split their votes. Crucially, RCV means winning candidates have support of a majority of voters when they express their ranked preferences. LD 1666 would thus mean that the governor and state legislators represent the majority will of voters. This is a good thing.

It's important to note two important points:
- Twice Maine voters affirmed their support for RCV. This occurred in 2016 and 2018.
- I understand the Maine Supreme Court issued an advisory opinion in 2017 that prevented the use of RCV for gubernatorial and legislative general elections. However, in Alaska, the Supreme Court ruled that RCV elections comply with plurality requirements, and that the Maine Supreme Court had the issue wrong. The Maine opinion should be reconsidered. Moreover, the Maine Legislature could clarify that the plurality winner is the winner of the RCV tally, not the candidate with the most first-place rankings.

For these reasons I urge this committee to vote "Ought to Pass."

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Doug Welldon

Doug Welldon
Islesboro
LD 1666

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