

TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: Wednesday, April 30, 2025

RE: LD 1787 An Act to Strengthen the Maine Clean Election Act

Good morning Senator Hickman and Representative Supica.

My name is Ann Luther. I'm a resident of Trenton. I've worked as a volunteer supporting campaign finance reform for over twenty years. It has sometimes been frustrating and discouraging work. At various points in over the last two decades, events could have bent the arc of history toward fairness and democracy, and yet we find ourselves here: in a landscape where money overruns our politics and the billionaires overwhelm our elections. Nevertheless, I am here today testifying in support of LD 1787. I have not given up.

County government in Maine is a backwater of public indifference and ignorance. Few voters know what county government does, who their commissioners might be, what issues they're facing, or what positions they might support. And yet, county government deals with important matters of law enforcement, domestic violence, public health, disaster recovery, and public infrastructure. Elections for these positions are often uncontested or uncompetitive. Running vigorous campaigns for these public offices could inform voters on the vital issues facing their communities.

Offering public funding for these elections will make running for office attractive to more candidates and help foster vigorous campaigns for these important offices. I'm for that. There has never been a more important time to foster democratic engagement at all levels of our republic, including at the county level.

I support LD 1787 for this reason and many more that I'm sure others will also cover.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.