



TO: The Honorable Senator Mark Lawrence  
The Honorable Representative Melanie Sachs, Co-chairs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

DATE: May 1, 2025

RE: LD 861 An Act Related to the Work of the Public Advocate

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The League of Women Voters of Maine submits the following testimony in support of LD 861.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people and that it should be free from undue influence, corruption, and the appearance of corruption.

We are concerned that, under current law, public officials in the conduct of their governmental service might be influenced by implicit or explicit promises of future employment from those they regulate. Employment offers need not be tendered during the period of government service for these considerations to come into play. If I am the state's regulator of widgets, and I hope for a career in the widget industry after my tenure with the state, my employment prospects may be enhanced by a friendly attitude toward widget makers, regardless of whether a job offer is tendered. This could affect my actions related to rulemaking, enforcement, and proposals for agency legislation.

Problems may also arise when former public officials exploit the connections and relationships that they developed during public service to influence government action, legislative or regulatory, for their new private employers.

Situations like these could make government more responsive to special interests and less responsive to the best interests of all the people of Maine. They could certainly make it appear so. Thus, they undermine public confidence in the effective administration of our government for the general welfare.

Current law provides that former executive branch employees may not intervene for anyone other than the state in matters that were under their purview during their state tenure. That's as it should be. The proposal in LD 861 goes further and establishes a one-year cooling-off period during which senior executive branch officials may not work for anyone regulated by their agency during their service. The League supports this proposal. We believe it will help to prevent self-interest from subtly distorting the motivations of executive branch employees and that it will contribute to public confidence in government.

Ann Luther  
Advocacy Chair  
League of Women Voters of Maine