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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State  
Department of the Secretary of State

*March 27, 2023*

Testifying Neither for Nor Against

L.D. 1109, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Create Consistent Election Dates for Citizen-initiated Referenda in Even-numbered Election Years"

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Shenna Bellows, and I am the Secretary of State and the chief elections officer. I am speaking today neither for nor against L.D. 1109 to provide the committee with information to consider in your decision-making.

One question we have is whether more competing measures would be created as a result of this bill, as there would be two legislative sessions that would occur between a citizen's initiative submitted by the deadline in the First Regular Session – an odd-numbered year – and when the measure would be voted in November of the following even-numbered year. Any changes proposed by the Legislature to the statute being addressed by the citizen's initiative could be viewed as inconsistent with the initiated bill and would be considered a competing measure that would be considered by the voters along with the citizen's initiative.

Of more direct impact to this office, is that by having citizens' initiatives only be considered during the even-numbered year makes it more likely that there would not be sufficient space on the candidate ballot, requiring a separate, referendum only ballot to be printed, at an additional cost to the state.

For all these reasons, I testify neither for nor against this bill. This concludes my testimony. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.