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Testimony in Support of LD 1022
"An Act to Allow School Budget Referenda on the Same Day as Primary Elections"

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Amy Arata, I represent New Gloucester and part of Gray, and it's my pleasure to present LD 1022, "An Act to Allow School Budget Referenda on the Same Day as Primary Elections".

This bill was suggested to me by the Maine Municipal Association, and reflects frustrations that I have heard from various municipalities. It would allow, but not require, school budget validation referendum elections to be held at the same time as a statewide primary election. Currently, the requirement that referenda be held within 30 days of the regional school unit budget meetings often means that a special election must be held, resulting in less voter participation and added expense for municipalities.

In summary, this bill accomplishes the following:

- Provides the steps necessary to ensure school budget referendum elections are held on the same day as the June primary election, or the second Tuesday in June when a primary election is not scheduled;
- Mitigates the costs associated with providing a separate off-cycle election, removing the additional financial burden to the property taxpayers;
- Reduces the impact on community volunteer pools, effectively assisting municipalities with the challenges associated with attracting and retaining volunteers and human capital; and,
- Reduces confusion among residents by streamlining elections.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Amy Arata
State Representative