

Richard A. Bennett  
Senator, District 18



3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
131st Legislature

**Testimony of Senator Richard A. Bennett**  
**In Support of LD 1336, "An Act to Increase Transparency in Municipal Ballot Referenda Expenditures"**  
**21 April 2023**

Good Afternoon Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am pleased to cosponsor LD 1336, "An Act to Increase Transparency in Municipal Ballot Referenda Expenditures."

Under current law, reporting requirements for those spending large sums of money on municipal referendum campaigns in municipalities with a population of less than 15,000 is different than municipalities with more than 15,000. This makes little sense to me. LD 1336 will close the population loophole and increase transparency for those living in smaller municipalities.

You may ask, is this really a current problem that needs to be solved? I would answer in the affirmative. Last year, there were two initiatives, one in Southport and one in Readfield, to bring municipal broadband to the towns. A great deal of money was spent in opposition to these referenda, with very few reporting requirements. According to one Maine Public article, "[...] a full accounting of its electioneering activities and funding sources is not possible because the vast majority of Maine towns do not require campaign finance reports by groups influencing local referendums."

I do not believe that the size of a municipality should trigger a political report; instead it should be the money that is spent. I thank the committee for its consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.