



Department of the Secretary of State

Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions

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Secretary of State

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Deputy Secretary of State

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

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

April 21, 2023

Testifying in favor

L.D. 1477 “RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Align the Proceedings for Circulating Written Petitions for People's Vetoes and Direct Initiatives with Federal Law”

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 in support of L.D. 1477.

First, I would like to thank the sponsor for submitting this bill at our department’s request. This bill is simply to align the Maine Constitution with the First Circuit Court’s decision,¹ which affirmed a U.S. District Court decision that requiring a circulator to be a Maine resident and to satisfy the voter registration requirements for Maine violates the First Amendment, as incorporated against the states by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

We have attached to our testimony the First Circuit Court decision for the Committee to review the Court’s reasoning.

This concludes my testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ *We the People PAC v. Bellows*, 519 F. Supp. 3d 13 (D. Me. 2021).