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Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and Members of
the State and Local Committee:

My name is Jean Ginn Marvin, and I am a resident of
Scarborough. I am here to testify in support of LD 1356
“An Act to Improve the Local Referendum Process”.

In recent years it has become common practice for local
ballots to contain questions of great importance for our
citizens to decide. I would submit it would be a much
better way for our government to be truly representative
is if The City (or Town) Council makes these complicated
decisions. So often, a small group of citizens become very
vocal about a certain issue and they and their friends
collect a very small number of signatures and get an item
on the ballot. “The people should decide” is their stated
rational.

As policy creators, each one of you knows this is not the recipe for great lawmaking. These people, while well meaning, rarely if ever represent the majority of the people in their town. As a former Town Councilor as well as State Representative, I can tell you for sure most people are not particularly interested in the vast majority of issues.

One of the reasons we have a representative form of government is that most citizens have neither the time nor interest to study all angles of these types of complicated policy issues. They have no understanding of how the unintended consequences will impact the bill they are considering.

15% of the population seems to me to be a very low bar. I would be happier with a higher percentage of signatures required, but for now, I do think this is a step in the correct direction.

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I would be happy to take any questions.