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*Testimony of Representative Laura Supica introducing
LD 1991, An Act Regarding Gubernatorial Primary Elections
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs*

Good morning, Senator Hickman and fellow members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I am Representative Laura Supica and I am honored to represent part of Bangor in the Maine Legislature. Today, I present to you **LD 1991, An Act Regarding Gubernatorial Primary Elections**.

In 2022, the Legislature passed a bipartisan bill¹ to set up the semi-open primary system. For the first time this year, Maine will have semi-open primaries for presidential, congressional and state legislative elections, meaning unenrolled voters will have the option of choosing to vote in the Republican or Democratic primaries without having to formally enroll as a Democrat, Republican, Libertarian or Green Independent.

Before we approved the change, unenrolled Maine voters could vote in primaries by enrolling in a party on Election Day. If they wanted to switch back to being unenrolled, they had to wait at least three months to leave their new party.

Maine has a large unenrolled population. This would opening up primaries to more voters and represents a critical step for the wellbeing of our democracy and democratic institutions. That is why I am introducing this bill today. That level of enfranchisement should not be limited to Congressional and Presidential elections. All Mainers deserve to have their voices heard, including when electing our Governor. Additionally, this would allow folks an opportunity to rank their preferred candidates for Governor, creating a run-off style system.

Just because this is out of the norm doesn't mean it isn't worth exploring. When we encourage and allow more voters to participate in our elections, we all benefit. Voters have been asking for semi-open primaries for years and I am proud of the progress we have made so far on this front. This bill presents another opportunity to further that work in making our elections more fair and accessible.

I am happy to bring this bill to you today and can try and answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

¹ <https://legislature.maine.gov/backend/App/services/getDocument.aspx?documentId=91699>