

**Testimony of Edward Polewarczyk on
LD 234, An Act to Eliminate Ranked-choice Voting
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans And Legal Affairs**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans And Legal Affairs: I am Edward Polewarczyk, from Wiscasset. I am here today to testify In Favor of L.D. 234 *An Act to Eliminate Ranked-choice Voting*.

Once again we had to tolerate the confusion associated with the use of Ranked Choice Voting for the 2nd Congressional District race. Using plurality Golden won the race outright with more than 2700 votes than his nearest opponent, but he did not have a majority. Ranked Choice Voting ultimately gave him the majority of votes but only after eliminating more than 11,000 ballots.

All Ranked Choice Voting accomplished was to delay the results, disregard the intentions of ~11,000 voters, frustrate the town clerks, and cause the voters to question the validity of the election process.

Many believe that Ranked Choice Voting will result in better representation because the candidates were elected by a majority of the voters. In the 1800's Maine determined the results of its elections using a majority of the votes cast. When a majority was not achieved by any candidate, additional elections were held until a single candidate received a majority of the votes cast. The result was an increasing lack of confidence in the election process.

The 7th Amendment to the Constitution of Maine was adopted and became effective on July 29, 1848, in response to the chaos of past elections. In that amendment the words, "a majority," were replaced with the words "the greatest number." The result was, that since 1848, elections in Maine were decided by "plurality". History has taught us a lesson.

In 2016 a Citizen's Initiative resulted in a referendum that was passed on November 8, 2016 by the voters 52% to 48%.. On May 23, 2017, the Maine Supreme Court provided an opinion that the Ranked-Choice Voting Act conflicts with the Maine Constitution and could not apply to the state elections listed in the Constitution.

So here we are today, a combination of elections decided by Plurality and Ranked-Choice Voting. Having a voting system where Plurality is used in some elections and Ranked-Choice voting is used in others, decreases the confidence the voters have in the validity of our elections. It is especially divisive in the case where the person with the most votes loses as a result of applying second choices and there is the question of the validity of the election.

The system is confusing to the voters and frustrating to the town clerks. It has made voting much more complicated than it should be. An increasing number of voters complain about Ranked Choice voting. They view it as a more complicated voting system. Voters are confused where it does apply or does not apply and what to expect for a given election. Many are not sure how to complete the ballot. Many don't want the other candidates but feel that they have to make additional choices or their vote will be disregarded. Many believe it violates "one person, one vote"

I urge the members of the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD234 to require that all state and federal elections are to be decided by plurality.