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Testimony of Rep. David Boyer introducing

L.D. 309, An Act to Allow a Political Party to Determine How That Party's Nominee Is Selected in a Primary Election

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

February 10, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and esteemed colleagues of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am David Boyer, representing House District 87. I am proud to present L.D. 309, An Act to Allow a Political Party to Determine How That Party's Nominee Is Selected in a Primary Election.

Currently, Maine mandates ranked-choice voting for all political party primaries, regardless of whether the members of those parties support or prefer this method. While ranked-choice voting has its advocates, it isn't necessarily the right fit for every political party and should not be imposed uniformly. Freedom of association is a fundamental principle, and this bill would ensure that each party can decide on the process that best reflects its values and the preferences of its members.

Historically, great deference has been afforded to political parties, as they are private associations made up of individuals sharing similar political values. This deference was clearly demonstrated in the most recent election during both the Republican and Democratic primaries.

On the Democratic side, the DNC was authorized to nominate Vice President Harris—even though she did not appear on primary ballots as a candidate.

On the Republican side, the Maine GOP declared that it would not recognize the ranked-choice voting results for the presidential primary and would instead use only the first-round results. The Secretary of State's office acknowledged the

historical deference given to private political parties, with spokesperson Emily Cook telling the *Portland Press Herald*, "What the parties do with those results and how they select their delegates for national conventions are up to them as parties."

Besides being the fairer and more equitable option, allowing parties to choose their nomination method could also save tax dollars. Ranked-choice voting tabulation can cost the state tens of thousands of dollars, and these costs could be avoided in the primary if a party opts to nominate its candidate based on a plurality vote, as it historically has.

This bill does not eliminate ranked-choice voting; rather, it grants each party the freedom to determine the method that works best for them. It is a balanced and fair approach that respects the diversity of political processes while safeguarding voter confidence and engagement.

I urge this committee to support L.D. 309 and to restore the ability of political parties to decide how they nominate their candidates. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.