



MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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April 7, 2025 - Testimony in support of LD 1229:

An Act to Create Equity in Maine's Campaign Finance Laws Between Enrolled and Unenrolled Candidates

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham, and I serve as the House Republican Leader. I represent House District 12, which includes the towns of Franklin, Gouldsboro, Hancock, Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, and Steuben. I am here today to present testimony on my proposed legislation, ***LD 1229 – An Act to Create Equity in Maine's Campaign Finance Laws Between Enrolled and Unenrolled Candidates.***

The intent of LD 1229 is simple: to ensure that unenrolled candidates for both gubernatorial and legislative offices face the same contribution limits as their enrolled counterparts, specifically when those unenrolled candidates are not participating in a primary election. Under the current structure of Maine's campaign finance laws, candidates who are enrolled in a political party face different contribution limits than unenrolled candidates, which creates an unfair disadvantage for unenrolled candidates, particularly in general elections.

Currently, Maine's campaign finance laws differentiate between candidates based on their enrollment status. For candidates who are on the ballot in a primary election, both enrolled and unenrolled candidates face specific contribution limits that are tied to the election cycle. However, candidates who are not on the ballot in a primary election—typically unenrolled candidates running in the general election—are limited to a lower contribution cap than their party-enrolled counterparts. This difference creates an unequal playing field, particularly when it comes to mounting a competitive and successful campaign.

In short, candidates who are unenrolled face a distinct financial disadvantage compared to their enrolled peers, and this inequity is especially pronounced in elections where the voter turnout in the primary election is minimal, or the primary has already decided the party nominees. LD 1229 seeks to correct this disparity by ensuring that unenrolled candidates have the same opportunity to raise funds for their campaigns, thereby giving voters a fairer choice in the general election.

Maine has a long tradition of supporting independent, unenrolled candidates, with independent-minded candidates frequently winning office in both the Legislature and the Governor's Office. The state has elected independent governors such as Angus King, who served from 1995 to 2003. LD 1229 is consistent with Maine's historic tradition of encouraging a broad range of political expression by ensuring that financial constraints do not inhibit a candidate's ability to run a competitive campaign.

The goal of campaign finance reform should always be to encourage fairness, transparency, and a level playing field. By creating more equitable campaign contribution limits for both enrolled and unenrolled candidates, this bill supports democratic engagement by ensuring that all candidates—regardless of political affiliation—have an equal opportunity to raise the funds necessary to communicate their message to voters. This is especially important in our modern political environment, where traditional and social media coverage and outreach often require significant financial resources.

In closing, I urge you to support LD 1229 to create equity in Maine's campaign finance laws. Enrolled and unenrolled candidates should face the same contribution limits, especially when they are not participating in primary elections. It will enhance voter choice, foster political diversity, and promote fairness in our electoral system.

I thank you for your time and attention to this important issue, and I respectfully ask for your support for LD 1229. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billy Bob Faulkingham". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
House Republican Leader