



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman  
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: April 7, 2025

RE: LD 1289 - An Act to Amend the Election Recount Process

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Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Al Cleveland. I am here today as the Advocacy Director of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League is in support of LD 1289 with the proposed amendment.

We support reducing the threshold for recounts across the board and for “no deposit” recounts in particular. The thresholds that we have been using in Maine are quite high relative to those in other states<sup>1</sup>, particularly in the era when over 90% of our ballots are counted by scanners, which have proven remarkably accurate.

We also support those provisions of the bill that permit the Office of the Secretary of State to include sunk costs as well as incremental costs in what a losing candidate may be asked to pay when a discretionary recount is unsuccessful.

The committee may wish to consider an amendment that would require the Secretary of State to set a cap on the cost of any recount, particularly for legislative and single county races. The financial risk associated with a recount should not depend on particulars of the race which are outside of the candidate’s control. For example, in the recent 2024 election, there were two ballot cards, which had to be sorted in order to recount legislative races. The sorting of ballot cards should not be billed to an unsuccessful recount candidate, nor should a candidate be charged more for a recount in House District 124 or 125, both of which are wholly contained within Scarborough, but for which the ballots would be mixed, than a recount in District 102 which would require all of the Freeport ballots. We are not certain to what degree the number of municipalities involved in a recount affects the time, and thus the cost, of a recount, but it seems unfair to charge more for a recount of House District 6, with ballots from 20 municipalities, than for a recount of House District 102, which would involve only the Freeport ballots.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We are happy to answer any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/election-recounts>