

Good Morning and thank you, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, for the opportunity to talk with you today about why I support LD 1356. My name is Joanne Mason from Readfield, and I'm the President of the Family Violence Project Board of Directors.

The Family Violence Project's mission is to end domestic violence and to provide support to victims of domestic violence. This non-profit role along with other interesting relationships and roles I am honored to have, has given me the privilege of partnering with folks across Kennebec and Somerset County and the greater Second Congressional District in non-partisan ways. This is truly a unique and special place that brings together so many people from different circumstances and backgrounds.

One thing I have learned is we all share some common values - we value our families, our communities, our support systems. We're also practical - by no means immune to the increasingly partisan nature of politics, but open to taking a hard look at candidates and making our voices heard based on who we think will best meet the needs of our unique community. That's how, in the last few elections, we've ended up sending Jared Golden to represent us in Congress while simultaneously backing Donald Trump for president.

Now, I may not always agree with the candidate who is getting our district's electoral vote - but I respect and appreciate the process. I'm grateful that our system is designed to ensure the Second District's voice is always heard and always matters. Only one other state - Nebraska - has a similar system. But now, outsiders are trying to meddle with how we do things, and they're trying to force a winner take all approach on Nebraska.

As you've heard from others today, I believe that Nebraska adopting a winner take all system would have disastrous consequences here in Maine. It would set us down a path that I fear ends with the Second District losing our ability to always have our voice heard through an allocated electoral vote. It would unleash a toxic lobbying campaign here which would serve to only further polarize our politics, and distract attention away from the real issues that those of us living and working in the Second District desperately need our elected officials to address.

We need to send a strong message to those seeking to meddle in Nebraska - and, by default, here in Maine - that we won't stand for any outside interference. LD 1356 sends that message and is the best way we can protect our current system and, most importantly, our voice. Thank you.