

Testimony in Support of ME LD 1422, “AN ACT Regarding Open Primary Elections and Ranked-choice Voting”

Co-Chairs Senator Craig Hickman, Rep. Laura Supica and members of the Veteran's and Legal Affairs Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak. MAINERS FOR OPEN ELECTIONS is in strong support of Senator Joe Baldacci's LD 1422 Bill, particularly with a major emphasis on the Nonpartisan Primary.

Like Paul Bunyan, Senator Baldacci has been standing tall but alone in the legislature for several years to better serve “We the People” through true election reform. Why continue to tweak a semi-open primary (also called a semi-closed primary)? It does not serve either the Maine voter or the parties in the long run.

Mainers deserve so much better! Please join with Senator Baldacci. Live Maine's motto to lead. Move beyond a partisan controlled semi-open primary to a nonpartisan primary.

Our public primary elections are paid for by Maine Taxpayers/Voters and should be truly owned and controlled by Mainers, not by private corporations through a partisan election process.

As a registered member of a major party (Republican), I believe our parties are vital and necessary for our democracy. But, remaining within a partisan election system is destructive to Maine, America and all parties because partisan elections are dying! Eighty five percent of our country's municipal elections (including Maine) are now nonpartisan. According to the latest Gallup poll in 2025, 51 percent of all voters are now unenrolled nationwide. This is more than our Republican and Democratic party members combined!!

In the 1940 Presidential elections, both major parties received more than 99.9 % of all votes. Only 500 votes nationwide in that election went to either an Independent or a third-party candidate. The major parties surely represented America. Not so today! Fast forward to the 2024 Presidential election nearly 90,000,000 Americans did not vote!! And neither major party candidate got 50 % of the vote! The partisan election process is doing great harm to all of us.

Please respect Maine Voters including people who do not want to be a member of a party (often referred to as independent voters.) They are the second largest voting block in Maine. Don't continue to label them as unenrolled voters. Please lead Maine and the nation to true election reform. Not red or blue state elections but Red, White and Blue elections: Nonpartisan Elections!

Please join Senator Baldacci and recommend passage of his LD 1422 Bill!

Thank you.

**Joe H. Pickering Jr. President of Mainers for Open Elections.
Purpose: Nonpartisan Election Reform**

Co-Founders the late Dr. Robert Croce and his wife Jill Martel and myself