



Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Department of the Secretary of State
Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions

Julie L. Flynn
Deputy Secretary of State

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
And Emily Cook, Deputy Secretary of State
Department of the Secretary of State

April 24, 2025

Testifying in favor of

L.D. 1666 “An Act to Include in the Ranked-choice Election Method for General and Special Elections the Offices of Governor, State Senator and State Representative and to Make Other Related Changes”

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Shenna Bellows, I live in Manchester, and I am the Secretary of State. I am testifying in favor of L.D. 1666.

In 2016, Maine voters made their voices heard at the ballot box, passing a citizens’ initiative to allow voters to rank their choices of candidates in elections for U.S. Senate, Congress, Governor, State Senate, and State Representative. But Mainers have never had the opportunity to use ranked choice voting for General Election races for Governor, State Representative or State Senator. It is about time that Maine election laws match what Maine voters supported in that election.

As the Department that oversees Maine elections, we know that voters are sometimes confused and often frustrated by the lack of ranked choice voting in these state-level elections. We are concerned that voter confusion and frustration may eventually lead to voter apathy – something we absolutely do not want to see. And while we can and would continue to ensure that voters know what to expect when they receive their General Election ballots, it would be much simpler for everyone if the laws matched what voters expect and wanted them to be.

The proposed changes in L.D. 1666 will make it clear in Maine law that ranked-choice voting allows each voter to express their preference for a candidate relative to the other candidates on the ballot, whether that is a Primary Election or General Election ballot.

The deepest value of ranked-choice voting is that it allows voters to vote their heart, rather than their fears. For this reason, and the others mentioned prior, we urge you to support L.D. 1666.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.