



April 24th, 2025

Testimony in support of LD1666: 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

Good afternoon Chair Hickman, Chair Supica and the distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Eli Durand-McDonnell, I am from Bar Harbor, Maine and I am the Policy Coordinator at Maine Youth Power, a youth-led, youth movement throughout rural and suburban Maine fighting to win human dignity, equity and a livable future for all. I am here today to ask that you support LD1666.

In my role at Maine Youth Power, I have the opportunity to speak with young people from all across the state. One message that I consistently hear is the desire for more choice at the ballot box. There is a desire to push beyond the status quo and elect candidates based on ideas, values, and visions for our great state, as opposed to electing candidates based simply on party affiliation or as some sort of larger political strategy that we have resigned to follow. Young people want to reach outside of the two party system, but that is not possible right now without risking splitting the vote. Ranked choice voting gives Mainers young and old more choice at the ballot box, and LD1666 expands this choice to crucial races; State Senators, State Representatives, and perhaps most consequentially, the office of Governor. These elections have such a tangible impact on the everyday lives of Mainers, and for such critical races we need the most choice possible.

As a child, I remember asking my parents how it was that we elected a governor, not once, but twice, that did not win more than 50% of the vote. It didn't seem logical to me that a candidate with a minority of votes could be elected. Years later, as I write this testimony, I still share that sentiment with my younger self. Looking at my peers, whether or not they remember those governors' races, many young Maine voters have used ranked choice voting for congressional and presidential elections for the entirety of their voting careers. The process is not complicated, and in fact, expanding RCV to all races would only give *more* clarity to voters. Maine has worked so long and so hard to become a national leader and inspiration for ranked choice voting, let's finish the job and expand RCV to the gubernatorial, State Senate, and State Representative races.

Once again, I urge you to support LD1666.

Thank you for your consideration,

Eli Durand-McDonnell