

Testimony by Joan Schwartz, of Newcastle Me.

Room 437 VLA Committee

Bill: LD 1666

I am here testify in support of LD 1666 to Expand Rank Choice Voting (RCV) to state legislative and gubernatorial general elections before the November 2026 election.

I support this bill for all the reasons stated before me ~ that Rank Choice Voting provides voters with more meaningful choices, by allowing and encouraging candidates to run who may not fall inline with a particular party. It allows candidates to run on the values and issues they believe are reflective of the will of their constituents which may or may not aligned with a particular party. It encourages and allows for less rank partisanship beholden to a particular party structure. In this way, it's MORE DEMOCRATIC. It eliminates spoilers, and reduces negative campaigning.

I believe that Rank Choice Voting also provides a better measure of the issues that are important to members of the larger community ~ signaling values, interests and policy priorities of significant segments of the population, allowing those voices to be heard, AND appropriately represented. In this way again, it's MORE democratic than outcomes that are driven by standard partisan bifurcation.

The Maine Legislature should pass the bill to expand rank choice voting. The legislature can and should clarify that the plurality winner is the winner of the final RCV tally, not the candidate with the most first place rankings.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of this important bill.