



Maine Conservation Voters

Inform. Vote. Protect.

Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters
“An Act to Require Disclosure of Campaign Funding Sources”
Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee.

My name is Nick Janzen, Director of Policy and Partnerships at Maine Conservation Voters, a state-wide non-profit organization with more than 13,000 members and supporters devoted to building an inclusive democracy and making conservation and climate action a political priority.

I’m here to testify in proud support of LD 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.” At MCV, we believe that you can’t have a healthy environment without a healthy democracy. That’s why we support measures to make our democratic institutions more accessible and responsive to Maine people. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is a common sense, non-partisan form of elections designed to maximize voter choice at the ballot. The more meaningful options voters have to express their preference for candidates who will champion our climate and environment, the better off our world will be. A poll from the 2024 election shows that Maine voters overwhelmingly support RCV and find it easy to use.¹ The time is long past to standardize the form of Maine elections as voters intended when they adopted RCV in 2016.

This bill returns elections for governor and state legislature to the RCV statute and conforms the statute with the Maine Constitution’s plurality provisions.² It does this by more clearly demonstrating that a voter expresses preferences when ranking candidates on their ballot and that a vote is not tallied until election officials have taken all of a voter’s preferences into account.

The purpose of the Constitution’s plurality provisions is to avoid the need for the Legislature to select the winner of an election. On several occasions during the 1800s, the Legislature decided

¹ Fair Vote, New Ranked Choice Poll in Maine: Harris Leads Statewide and in 1st District, Trump leads in 2nd District, Nov. 1, 2024, <https://fairvote.org/press/maine-poll-oct2024/>.

² Me. Const. art. IV, pt. 1, § 5; Me. Const. art. IV, pt. 2, § 4; Me. Const. art. V, pt. 1, § 3.

elections where no candidate received a majority of the votes. At times, they selected candidates who didn't even receive the most votes. This political history culminated with the Maine Capitol Riot of 1880 and the later adoption of the plurality requirements. The point was to improve the system so that people, not other elected officials, could directly elect their governor and representatives.

This bill makes RCV consistent with both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution. It will result in the election of gubernatorial and state legislative candidates who receive the most votes, without requiring a majority, and it does so directly at the ballot, not in the State House, assuring voter confidence in the political system.

The bill is also consistent with the Constitution's text. In 2020 the Alaska Supreme Court held that that state's RCV statute is consistent with its constitutional plurality requirement, both of which are virtually identical to Maine's.³ The Alaska Supreme Court understood that a vote is not determined until after the final round of tabulation.

In contrast, the Justices of the Maine Supreme Court determined in their 2017 solemn occasion that a vote was final after the first round of voting, without pointing to anything in the Constitution or the statute that required them to reach that decision, and that RCV would deny candidates who won this "first plurality."⁴

LD 1666 clarifies that a vote is only determined after the final round of tabulation. There is no first plurality, there is only the plurality or the majority that exists after the final tabulation, and it is, therefore, consistent with the constitution.

For these reasons, MCV, along with our undersigned members, urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1666.

Nicholas Janzen, Esq.
Director of Policy and Partnerships
Maine Conservation Voters

³ Kohlhaas v. Off. of Lieutenant Governor, Div. of Elections, 518 P.3d 1095, 1118 (Alaska 2022).

⁴ Opinion of the Justices, 2017 ME 100, 65, 162 A.3d 188.

APRIL 2025

**WE SUPPORT THE EXPANSION
OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING IN
MAINE.**

THE UNDERSIGNED 555 MAINERS SUPPORT
THE EXPANSION OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING
TO GUBERNATORIAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE
RACES.

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Beth Allen, Wells
Nancy Anderson, Cumberland Foreside
Penelope Andrews, Hermon
Allison Andrews, Portland
Donald Angevine, Bethel
Andree Appel, Brunswick
Erika Arthur, Freedom
Tom Aversa, Unity
Breeze Azrael, Abbot
Jane Babbitt, Camden
Christopher Babcock, Bath
Joyce Bailey, Windham
Meret Bainbridge, Saco
Susan Bakaley Marshall, Montville
Joseph Barth, Bridgton
Erica Bartlett, Portland
Luke Bartol, Portland
Jeff Bates, Yarmouth
Janet Baumann, Penobscot
Jan Beach, Belgrade
Laura Bean, Brunswick
Roberta Beavers, South Berwick
Louisa Beckett, South Portland
Christine Beitzl, Orono
Lisa Belanger, North Yarmouth
Susan Bernat, Portland
David Bilski, New Harbor
Lucy Birkett, Freeport
Pam Blake, Freeport
Catherine Bloom, Fryeburg
Roy Bouchard, Rome
Zach Bouchard, Cumberland
Barbara Bourgoine, Readfield
Kate Bourne, Portland
Stephen Bowman, Brunswick
Cletis Boyer, Belfast
Sarah Braik, Portland
Katherine Branch, South Paris

Stephen Brandon, Kittery
Bruce Brandt, Brunswick
Cathy Breen, Falmouth
Lucy Breslin, South Portland
Dyanne Brewster, Limington
Martha Briggs, Windham
Ken Brinnick, Mechanic Falls
Melissa Britsch, Brunswick
Anna Brown, South Freeport
Em Brown, Auburn
Barrie Brusila, Warren
Hans Bryant, Windsor
Kathleen Buckley, Windham
Deborah Burd, Strong
Gary Burke, East Wilton
Deborah Burke, Wilton
Dylan Burmeister, Nobleboro
Bruce Burnham, Old Town
Laurel Burns, Portland
Helen Burton, Peaks Island
Marianne Butak, Wayne
Rebecca Buyers, Sweden
Chris Cabot, North Yarmouth
Josh Caldwell, Portland
Joan Candelmo, Scarborough
Deborah Capwell, Belfast
Vernon Carter, Kittery
Laurie Cartier, Bangor
Nancy Cartonio, Portland
Barbara Casey, Topsham
Donna Cassidy, Gorham
Elizabeth Castro, Winterport
Patricia Chase, Cape Elizabeth
Aaron Chase, York
Wendy Cherubini, Portland
peggy Christian, Bowdoinham
Patricia Lord Clark, Brunswick
Lori Clark, Readfield
Rebecca Clark, Whitneyville
Ruth Clay, Hampden

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Ruth Clay, Hampden
Aimee Claybaugh, Brooklin
Joel Clement, Wayne
Hudson Coccoluto, Portland
Laurence Anne Coe, Rockland
Stephen Cole, Stockton Springs
Barbara Cole, Orono
Bruce Cole, Cape Elizabeth
Gabe Cole, Portland
David Collins, Windham
Gerald Collins, Southwest Harbor
Susan Conard, Northport
David Conwell, Brunswick
Margaret Leitch Copeland, Bath
Brenda Corkum, Chelsea
Celeste Cota, Brewer
Andrew Cottle, Freeport
Susan Covino, York
Debra Coyman, Falmouth
Jacquelyn Cressy, Topsham
Jacquelyn Cressy, Topsham
Randall Curtis, Blue Hill
Julie Daigle, Sinclair
Kymberly Dakin, Yarmouth
Mary Daley, Scarborough
Linda Dartt, Montville
Amy Davidoff, Vassalboro
Jenny Davidson, Freeport
Katherine Davis, Brunswick
Corliss Davis, Belfast
Shirley Davis, Orono
Marilyn Davis, Falmouth
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 Chuck Farrell, Topsham
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