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Supplemental Testimony of Representative Seth Berry on his Sponsor's Amendment to LD 859

Sen. Baldacci, Rep. Matlack and distinguished members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Seth Berry, I reside in Bowdoinham and represent House District 55, and I write to present my proposed committee amendment to LD 859.

Much of the 2021 testimony on the record, which appeared to be from a somewhat organized effort, misreads the bill. Last year's bill would allow, but not require ranked choice voting. It would provide more local control, not less.

This is the heart of the matter. The supporters of this bill simply believe Maine's 431 non-charter municipalities should have the *flexibility* to choose runoff elections, ranked-choice voting, or traditional plurality winner voting as they wish – just as our 57 charter municipalities *already can*. After all: are these 431 towns not just as worthy than the others?

To better reflect this intent, I propose an amendment giving the bill a new title: “An Act to Give Municipalities More Options in Municipal Elections.” Here is what it would do:

Under current law, Title 30-A §2528 sub-10, secret ballot elections for municipal officials in non-charter towns can only be decided by plurality vote.

With this amended language, non-charter municipalities may formally adopt an alternative method under this section. This may be ranked choice voting, or it may be a runoff election. Most will likely make no change. Those who wish to, if we allow it, may do so if the town votes to proceed, at least 180 days in advance of town meeting.

As of the night before this work session, three items of testimony had been posted in relation to this amendment. They were from the [League of Women Voters](#) (LWV) and from local officials in [China](#) and [Harpwell](#). I believe a representative of the LWV will be present and able to speak to this at your work session, should you wish it.

Many thanks. I hope this amendment is useful and is worthy of your support.

District 55 Bowdoin, Bowdoinham and Richmond (part), plus the unorganized territory of Perkins Island Township