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Dear Members of the 130th Maine Legislature,

I am writing as a resident of the municipality of China in support of LD 859, An Act To Allow Municipalities To Use Ranked-choice Voting in Municipal Elections.

As a member of the Selectboard in China, I recently proposed changing our municipal voting method to ranked choice. Little did I know that there is a Maine statute requiring municipalities to used the plurality method in all municipal elections. The reason I support ranked choice voting is that, while there is no voting method for multi-seat positions that satisfies all the criteria that constitute a fair process, ranked choice voting does a better job at representing the preferences of the population.

The Majority Criterion states that a candidate who has a majority of votes should be the winner. Under the plurality method that we use now, a candidate wins by earning the most votes, even though it may not be more than 50% of the votes. In other words, a candidate can win although a majority of voters did **not** vote for him/her.

The Condorcet Criterion states that a candidate who beats each opponent in a head-to-head comparison should win. The plurality method does not include a voter's preference beyond the first choice, allowing for a candidate to win even though other candidates might be generally preferred over him/her.

These are just two examples of criteria that fail with the plurality method of voting, which can produce a winner who is not the most popular among the voters. It seems to me that a municipality should be allowed to adopt a voting method that allows for better reflect the views of its residents.

I would appreciate your serious consideration of LD 859, An Act To Allow Municipalities To Use Ranked-choice Voting in Municipal Elections.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Most Sincerely,

Janet M Preston
China, Maine