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Kennebunk
LD 1443

I am writing to support Representative Dan Sayer's LD 1443. I live in Kennebunk and lived through a recall effort that nearly tore this town apart. A minority of persons with unsubstantiated accusations against school board members was able to manipulate our (admittedly inadequate) town charter and bring a recall effort to our spring ballot. The recall proponents lost 3:1 and thankfully, justice prevailed. We are in the process of strengthening our charter so these spiteful shenanigans cannot happen again.

In further assurance of keeping recalls few and far between, I understand that statewide, LD 1443 will enable Mainers to challenge and remove school board members ONLY if they have been found to have committed specific violations. Excellent! Evidence-based and concrete violations. Eliminate the ambiguity that we suffered.

Critically, this bill will insure that a small minority of disgruntled people cannot hijack the election process for their own cause. If petitions have to be signed by at least 25% of the voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election, that is a reasonable, higher bar to achieve, eliminating manipulations by the few, the petty.

Motivated by the horror of the recall effort in Kennebunk, I have been elected to our Charter Commission and we are similarly looking to require definite, identifiable, evidence-based, provable violations with a substantially higher proportion of voters needed for the recall processes steps.

The threat of easy, baseless recalls now hangs like an anvil over Mainers who would like to serve their school districts. Please make it more difficult to upend the electoral process. Everyone has their say as a voter. Unless egregiously warranted, board members should fulfill their terms with single-minded dedication to students and teachers.