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## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

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Date: April 7, 2023

To: Senator Tim Nangle, Senate Chair  
Representative Holly Stover, House Chair  
And members of the State and Local Government Committee

From: Patti Dubois, Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association

Re: LD1356 – An Act to Improve the Local Referendum Process by Increasing the Percentage of the Population Required to Submit a Local Referendum Question

Position: Neither For Nor Against

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association is neither for nor against LD 1356 and we thank you for the opportunity to outline our points for your committee.

Clerks noted that the increase in the number of signatures required from 10% to 25% of the number of votes cast at the last gubernatorial election is significant and may pose a barrier for citizens who wish to bring referenda forward. Members suggested that a smaller increase, such as 15 or 20%, may be more palatable.

Although certifying a higher number of signatures would result in more work for registrars, members indicated that this is not a significant concern. Members indicated that they generally have very few of these come forward, but acknowledge that this bill is likely being brought forward due to some towns experiencing nuisance petitions that can become burdensome.

Municipalities who have a local charter would not be impacted by this bill, if adopted, unless their charter specifically refers back to state statute. Some charter communities have a two-step process, which requires a small number of voters to sign on to an effort before a formal petition process can be initiated.

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association appreciates the opportunity to share its testimony with the Committee. Should any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at 207)680-4210 or by email: [pdubois@waterville-me.gov](mailto:pdubois@waterville-me.gov) .