

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

**LD 1356 - An Act to Improve the Local Referendum Process by Increasing the Percentage of the
Population Required to Submit a Local Referendum Question**

April 25, 2023

Sen. Nangle, Rep. Stover, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am testifying today in opposition to LD 1356 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC).

Municipal officials appreciate the intention of this bill but remain steady in their position to maintain local control. Currently, charter communities have the ability to amend their charter to increase the threshold for the number of voters required on a written petition for a municipal referendum but those without a charter have no channels to change the threshold amount.

In the spirit of keeping this decision local, the LPC would ask the committee to kindly consider keeping the current standards but providing explicit authority for communities to increase the threshold if desired. Likewise, a threshold range could be considered, starting at the current threshold of 10% going through 25% (or 15% per the proposed amendment), which would allow more flexibility for communities to assign the threshold that would work for their citizens.

For these reasons the LPC is neither for nor against LD 1356. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.