



Maine Conservation Voters

Inform. Vote. Protect.

Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters
“An Act to Address Legislative Salaries”
Before the State and Local Government Committee
April 25, 2023

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Distinguished Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

I am writing to express Maine Conservation Voters' **strong** support for LD 1155, "An Act to Address Legislative Salaries" which proposes an increase in the salaries of Legislators in Maine. As the Political Director of Maine Conservation Voters, I am proud to speak on behalf of our more than 13,000 members and supporters who believe that making conservation and climate action a political priority is crucial for our state's future. We support measures that make Maine's democratic institutions more efficient, secure, and accessible and oppose those that do not achieve that profoundly American goal.

The current salary for Maine Legislators is \$10,815 in the first year and \$7,725 in the 2nd year of each biennium per year, which is one of the lowest in the country. This low salary creates a barrier for many individuals who would like to run for office but are unable to do so because of financial constraints. This limits the diversity of our elected representatives and undermines our democracy. By increasing the salary of Legislators to \$25,000 in the first year of each biennium and \$20,000 in the second year, we can make running for office more accessible to a wider range of Mainers, including those from underrepresented communities.

Additionally, increasing the salary of Legislators would help to ensure that elected officials are compensated fairly for the time and energy they invest in their work. Legislators are responsible for shaping the policies that affect our state and its residents. They spend countless hours in committee meetings, researching complex issues, and meeting with constituents to understand their concerns. Increasing their salaries would help to attract and retain public servants who are committed to serving their constituents and making a positive impact in our state.

Finally, we believe that increasing the salary of Legislators is an issue of equity. Many *potential* citizen legislators in Maine come from backgrounds where they may not have the financial resources to support themselves while serving in office. This puts them at a disadvantage and

perpetuates inequities in our political system. By increasing their salaries, we can create a more level playing field and ensure that all Mainers have the opportunity to serve their communities in elected office.

Maine Conservation Voters strongly urges the committee to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1155. This is an issue of equity, accessibility, and fairness that will benefit our state and its residents in the long run. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Will Sedlack
Political Director, Maine Conservation Voters