

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I write to you today in support of LD 231 "An Act to Establish Open Primaries".

I, like so many Mainers, consider myself an independent thinker. That is why when I turned 18 and the time came to register to vote I registered as an Independent. Since then I have voted for Independents, Democrats, and Republicans for elected offices ranging from school board member to President of the United States. I believe that being an unenrolled voter has allowed me to more freely examine a candidate's views and decide from there, free of labels, who I believe makes the best possible choice. I also believe that this is probably the exact reason why almost 1/3 of Maine voters have also chosen to register as unenrolled.

While being unenrolled has given me certain freedoms, it has also handcuffed me in other ways. During primary season I continually find myself needing to make difficult choices. As someone who has become more active working with campaigns I need to decide if I am going to put a large amount of energy into campaigning for the candidate whom I want to see move forward or wait it out and see who their party places on the ballot. While I can use my voice leading up to primary day I am silenced at the polls simply because I have not chosen to be either Republican or Democrat.

Thirty-two percent of Mainers are currently silenced at the polls during primaries. That number is likely to increase as we move towards Automatic Voter Registration. Eighty percent of Mainers support open primaries. I think the numbers make it clear that it is time that Maine moves forward when it comes to elections and opens its primaries to more than those voters who are registered with a party.

I appreciate you taking your time to listen to my story and why I believe supporting LD231 is important.

Thank you,  
Tobie Akerley Gordon  
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