

Bill Bell
Saco

April 8, 2021

In Support of LD 231, An Act to Establish Open Primaries
Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on
Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Bill Bell, and I reside in Saco.

I am the son of a U.S. Foreign Service Officer, who was posted in a number of foreign countries, including behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. I grew up with an abiding belief in the importance of voting.

In the fifty years that I have lived in Maine, I have usually felt it important to vote in primary elections. I have at different times felt that a one party – but not always the same party-- had a truly superior candidate on their primary election ballot. To be able to support that individual with my vote, I would of course enroll in that party, only often to have to dis-enroll, and enroll in the other party, prior to the next election.

But the importance of LD 231 is not about removing my inconvenience, or the mild annoyance persons like me present to the Registrar of Voters. It's about no longer forcing someone to subscribe to something in which they may not believe—being a member of a particular political party—in order to vote in June to see that an outstanding candidate –likely a candidate who will appeal to ALL Mainers, not just those of one particular party-- is on the ballot in November.

Political parties are generally important to the healthy functioning of a democracy, but they should not be allowed to control who can vote and who doesn't, especially when all of us are paying for Maine's elections.