

5 April 2021

To: Senator L Luchini, Representative Calazzo, Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Comm.

From: Roger W. Bowen, Prospect Harbor

Re: LD 231 “An Act to Establish Open Primaries”

Dear Officials:

I urge you to support LD 231. I believe that LD 231 may mitigate the political tribalism that has so negatively infected American democracy and only worsened during the Trump administration, by permitting unenrolled voters/independents to participate in the party nomination process. Nearby states—New Hampshire and Vermont—already have adopted an open primary system, along with more than two scores of states throughout our great nation. Studies have shown that in states where open primaries exist, independents who opt to participate in open primaries are more likely to vote in general elections. And that strengthens the bedrock of our democracy.

LD 231 is a bipartisan effort to strengthen Maine democracy and has support of 80% of Maine voters. As more and more voters abandon party affiliation and opt to become independents—as a plurality of Maine voters have already done—the open primary process respects voters’ right not to be affiliated with either of the major political parties and promises a more inclusive politics.

LD 231 also works against those undemocratic forces that seek to suppress the vote. Open primaries, simply put, make voter suppression more difficult.

Thank you for considering my views and all good wishes in making LD 231 work for Maine voters.