

Ryan Crowell
Raymond

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

I am submitting testimony in strong support of L.D. 231, "An Act to Establish Open Primaries."

Maine has a proud tradition of civic participation -- we go to town meetings, show up on election day, and we are committed to helping our communities.

However, there is one area we can do better. Under current law, the 32% of Maine voters who are unenrolled -- often referred to as independents -- are unable to participate in primary elections. This is fundamentally wrong given that primaries are taxpayer funded, meaning that our independent neighbors are paying for elections in which they can't currently participate.

Most independent voters I know are engaged and informed, they just prefer to not enroll in a political party. In fact, 44% of active duty service members and 49% of veterans are independent. These are men and women who have risked their lives to protect our democracy, and yet they are being denied the right to participate in our democratic process.

Thank you for your consideration.

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