

David Souers  
Friendship  
LD 234

My name is David Souers. I am a resident of Friendship. I support Ranked Choice Voting in opposition to LD 234.

I am 76 years old having voted for more than 50 years in local, state and Federal elections that were not ranked choice elections. I often witnessed elections with more than two candidates, won by the least favored candidate. Ranked choice voting allows for greater choice for the best overall liked or acceptable candidate to win with less risk of getting the least liked elected.

The process is fair as it allows for the first choices of every voter to be counted, as we would have without ranked choice voting. If one candidate receives a majority of votes, they win, as they would without ranked choice voting.

But if no candidate receives a majority vote in the first round, then the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated during each round of tabulations until a majority winner is achieved based on the voters ranking each choice.

The benefits are significant for our democracy:

1. We can more meaningful choices as ranked choice voting encourages candidates to compete from outside the major parties.
2. It offers more opportunities to hear and discuss the issues, increasing the diversity of views available for voters to consider.
3. It allows voters to support their favorite candidate without losing the chance to elect a similar like-minded candidate and unintentionally helping elect a spoiler candidate who they like the least.
4. It reduces negative misinformation campaigning as candidates must attract second and third choice rankings. Voters are less likely to rank a candidate highly who is negative toward their preferred candidate.
5. It allows candidates with less money to run in elections against PACS with big money, when they appeal to enough voters who rank them high, among those campaigning on negative advertising. This reduces the influence of out of state money in our politics.

I urge you to vote against LD 234, in favor of ranked choice voting now and in the future to expand ranked choice voting to all elections in Maine.