



### **Testimony in Support of LD 911:**

“An Act to Modify Ranked-choice Voting with Regard to Candidates Who Withdraw from an Election”

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 911, "An Act to Modify Ranked-choice Voting with Regard to Candidates Who Withdraw from an Election." Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this necessary reform.

### **Ensuring the Integrity of Ranked-Choice Voting**

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) was implemented in Maine to improve election outcomes and better represent voter preferences. However, the current process contains a critical flaw: when a candidate withdraws from an election but remains on the ballot, votes cast for them are still counted in the initial rounds, causing unnecessary voter confusion and potentially distorting election results.<sup>1</sup> LD 911 introduces a commonsense fix that ensures votes are accurately reallocated to active candidates, strengthening the integrity of Maine’s electoral process.

### **Preventing Wasted Votes and Voter Confusion**

Under current law, voters who rank a withdrawn candidate first may unknowingly waste their vote if that candidate is still included in early rounds of counting. This creates unnecessary voter disenfranchisement and can leave Mainers frustrated by the system. By ensuring that votes cast for withdrawn candidates automatically transfer to the next-ranked, continuing candidate, LD 911 enhances voter confidence in the fairness and transparency of ranked-choice elections.

### **Maintaining Fair and Accurate Election Results**

LD 911 ensures that the tabulation process reflects the electorate's true preferences by treating votes cast for withdrawn candidates like exhausted ballots. This prevents distortions in early rounds that could impact later stages of the ranked-choice process. The bill maintains the system's integrity by adjusting each round accordingly, ensuring that every active vote is counted fairly.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mainepolicy.org/false-majority/>



## **Administrative Clarity and Efficiency**

Election officials face challenges administering RCV elections, including lengthy tabulation periods and legal uncertainties surrounding candidate withdrawals. LD 911 simplifies this process by providing clear guidance on handling withdrawn candidates, making the system more predictable for both election administrators and voters.

## **Conclusion**

LD 911 is a necessary and pragmatic reform that improves the ranked-choice voting process by ensuring withdrawn candidates do not distort election outcomes. It strengthens voter confidence, prevents wasted votes, and provides more precise guidance to election officials. For these reasons, we strongly urge the committee to support LD 911 and advance it for full legislative approval. Thank you for your time and consideration.