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LD 1666

I am strongly in favor of LD 1666, which would extend Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) to elections for Governor and the state legislature.

RCV is the best way to elect candidates in single-seat races, as it ensures that whoever wins actually has the support of a majority of the voting public — this is not the case with our current plurality elections, where people can win with far less than 50% support when there are 3 or more candidates running in one race.

Our current system not just enables, but encourages, extremism, as it is often more effective to seek fanatical support from a small segment of the public instead of broad support from the everyone. This has led directly to our current state of politics where anger, disrespect, and hyper-partisanship are eroding our democratic institutions. Under RCV, this sort of vitriol is not a winning strategy, as candidates need to compete not just for #1 votes, but to be voters' 2nd, 3rd, etc. choices as well.

RCV also reduces the barriers to forming third parties, which are healthy for any functioning democracy. Under our current plurality voting system, it's very hard for third parties — whether they're Libertarians, Working Families, or anything in between — to compete in elections because voters fear "wasting" their vote on someone who can't win, or third-party candidates being "spoilers" who draw votes away from like-minded major party candidates. RCV allows people to vote their conscience, instead of voting for someone they don't actually support because they're afraid someone even less-aligned will win instead.

Most importantly, Maine voters support RCV. In 2016, voters approved Question 5, which included using RCV for governor and state legislature, only to be drastically amended by the legislature following a non-binding Supreme Judicial Court advisory opinion. Nevertheless, we've been using RCV for Congressional elections since 2018 and voters have found it to be simple, easy, and far superior to our old system.

Expanding RCV to cover Governor and state legislative races would be in line with the will of Maine voters, reduce confusion by applying the same voting methods to all state elections, and apply the many benefits of RCV to additional offices.

Please vote YES on LD 1666. Thank you.