

Ritchie Dow
Cumberland
LD 1446

TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: 5/2/2025

RE: LD 1446 – RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of
Maine to Lower the Voting Age to 16 Years of Age

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing
Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Ritchie Dow and I am a resident of Cumberland. I am testifying in
support of LD 1446.

I was one of thirteen volunteers with the League of Women Voters of Maine
(LWVME) who participated in a comprehensive two-year consensus study to research
the potential impacts, positive and negative, of lowering the voting age to 16. Our
research team compiled our findings based upon statistical evidence and interviews
with municipalities and organizations having relevant experience with the issue.

Based upon my experience participating in the consensus study, I support LD 1446.

It is interesting to note, and I feel it is a convincing argument, that after various
studies in the field of cognitive science, the ability of an adolescent to make the
decisions necessary for voting rises between the ages of 11 and 16 and reaches that of
an adult at age 16. Research has also shown that, when tested for civic knowledge,
16-year-olds had higher scores than those in the next higher age group. I see no
reason to “rank” citizens aged 20 and over as more competent than those who are
16-20 years old when it comes to voting.

Questions have been raised about whether 16 and 17-year-olds would turn out to vote.
At the municipal level, there have been positive results in the U.S. where the voting
age has been lowered. Based upon statistics at home and abroad there is every reason
to believe that younger voters will continue to turn out. This is especially true
because they have a vested interest in state and local elections where there are matters
(school board, healthcare, etc.) that concern them directly.

I believe that lowering the voting age to 16 in Maine would be a positive step in
giving younger voters a voice in the issues that affect them. This also would offset
the increasing imbalance in demographics in our state, as the younger population is
greatly under-represented relative to older age groups.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.