



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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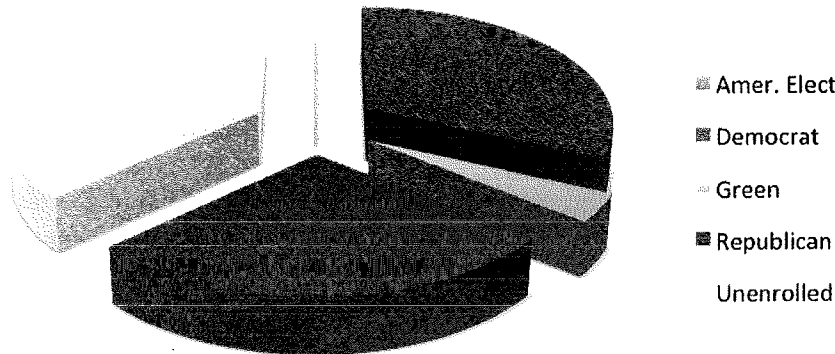
Testimony of Rep. Deane Rykerson

Good morning Sen. Tuttle, Rep. Luchini and the honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, I am Rep. Deane Rykerson and I serve the people of Kittery, House District 151. I am here to present **LD 1422, An Act To Establish a Nonpartisan Primary and a Presidential Primary Election System and Instant Run-off Voting for State and Federal Candidates.**

This bill has two components. The first is to establish a primary for U.S. President in Maine rather than our present caucus system. The second component establishes a nonpartisan primary for State and Federal offices (other than President).

We have a tradition of independence in Maine. For example, in 1992 Maine and Utah were the only two states where a non-major party took second place (Ross Perot). For some time, the largest political party in Maine has been the unenrolled. Here are results from 2012 (Maine Sec of State).

Amer. Elect	Democrat	Green	Republican	Unenrolled	Total
77	314993	37764	269589	361797	984220
0%	32%	4%	27%	37%	



However, our primaries are restricted to those who are enrolled in a party, thereby disenfranchising almost forty percent of the voters in the primary elections.

Last summer and fall, campaigning for State Representative, I knocked on every door in my district. The comment I heard most was not about taxes or even jobs. What I heard was a plea to get our government functional and representative without entrenched party politics, especially in Washington, D.C. In the research I have done since then, it seems that a good way to get there is by electing people, not parties. The logistics of doing this is somewhat different from what we are used to, but not unprecedented.

At present, four states use this system: California, Louisiana, Nebraska, and Washington. Strong efforts are being made in Florida. In Montana, the Legislature recently passed a measure to make the nonpartisan primary a referendum question in the 2014 election.

How does this work? We would have a single primary, not a Democratic or Republican primary and anyone registered could vote. Candidates could declare a party membership or not. Voters would choose their top candidate, their second choice, third etc. In the first 'runoff' the lowest vote-getter would be eliminated until only two candidates were left to run in the general election.

In the 2012 election only 57% of eligible voters actually voted nationwide. We're better in Maine with 68% voters. But I keep hearing from voters about their disinterest in elected government, about their alienation from the political process. Anything we can do to regain trust and build an engaged voting public is a step forward.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deane Rykerson". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Representative Deane Rykerson, Kittery