

Good morning.

Sen. Mason, Rep Luchini and Members of the Committee.

I am Julia Fitz-Randolph of Pemaquid and I am here today to oppose LD #1625 to fully repeal Maine's Ranked Choice Voting law.

Let me tell you why.

I am a person of faith, a Unitarian Universalist that affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We stand for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large.

Grounded by our principles, Unitarian Universalists are called to live our faith in action. Through the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, of which I am honored to be Co-chair, we believe Ranked Choice Voting will ensure more positive campaigning and promote greater support for the democratic process.

I know all of you decry the presence of hate speech, vulgarity, extreme incivility and other dangerous and unseemly words and behaviors that are becoming all-too familiar tactics in our current political environment.

Voters are not likely to rank a second place candidate who has issued personal attacks against their favorite choice. Experience in Portland, Maine has shown that there was less negativity and more focus on the real issues under a system where ranked choice voting is in place. In turn, that leads to broader involvement in the electoral process, and greater voter turnout for elections.

That's why we as Unitarian Universalists believe our Ranked Choice Voting law is a powerful solution to ensure civil discourse.

Mainers agree. 400,000 of us.

Please oppose the repeal of Ranked Choice Voting so that Maine can lead the nation with a vision of democracy which unifies our country and strengthens the inclusion of all to learn about and participate in the democratic process. Thank you.