



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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**Contact:** Jill Ward  
207-317-6310

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE ARGUES IN SUPPORT OF CITIZEN-INITIATED RANKED CHOICE VOTING LAW**

*The League joins Maine Citizens for Clean Elections and the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting in today's oral argument before the State Supreme Court*

**Augusta** – Today the League of Women Voters of Maine (LWVME) presented oral argument urging the Maine Supreme Judicial Court to uphold the ranked choice voting citizen initiative (RCV) passed on November 8, 2016.

The first hurdle for opponents of ranked choice voting is simply to get the Supreme Court to review the case. During oral argument, the Justices asked tough questions about whether the issue should even be before them. The LWVME has argued that since the voters have spoken on this legislation, there is no justification for the court to invoke its rarely used “solemn occasion” authority at this time. The court proceeding was initiated at the request of RCV opponents in the Maine Senate.

In addition to the question of whether a solemn occasion exists, the court heard arguments on the underlying questions around the constitutionality of the new ranked choice voting law. Ranked choice voting has been challenged in other states but has been consistently upheld.

“After years of careful study, the League of Women Voters of Maine endorsed ranked choice voting because we believe that our civil discourse would greatly benefit from a different approach to campaigns and elections – one that gives more power to voters and also encourages positive, issue-oriented campaigns,” said Jill Ward, President of the League of Women Voters of Maine. “We are proud to defend our citizen-initiated law and remain confident that it complies with Maine’s constitution.”

“Maine Citizens for Clean Elections and the League of Women Voters of Maine have been fighting for democratic values for decades,” said John Brautigam, counsel for Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. “Today these organizations presented compelling reasons for honoring the people’s voice on ranked choice voting.”

The decision of the Supreme Court is expected in one to two weeks. The opinion will be advisory and non-binding, but is likely to influence the future course of RCV implementation in Maine.

Audio recording of the oral argument will be available on the Supreme Court’s website at:  
[http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine\\_courts/supreme/stream.shtml#recent](http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine_courts/supreme/stream.shtml#recent)

The League’s brief, along with other briefs and related documents and information, are on the State of Maine Judicial Branch website at:  
[http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine\\_courts/supreme/senate\\_question\\_2017/index.html](http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine_courts/supreme/senate_question_2017/index.html)

*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public policy education organization, which builds citizen participation in the democratic process, studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner, and enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.*

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