



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

LD 878 An Act To Make Clean Election Filing Deadlines Consistent for All Candidates

March 6th, 2019

Senator Luchini, Representative Schneck, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 878 An Act To Make Clean Election Filing Deadlines Consistent for All Candidates. My testimony is Neither For Nor Against.

Initially, the Maine Clean Election Act called for different filing deadlines for party and unenrolled candidates. That changed in 2009 when the law was amended to make the qualifying period exactly the same for all candidates in similar races whether they were members of major parties or not. This change addressed a question of fairness, one raised in each election cycle, because unenrolled gubernatorial and legislative candidates had several months longer than their party opponents to complete the qualifying process.

While the change did impose a more aggressive timeline for unenrolled candidates, it brought two benefits. First, all unenrolled candidates who qualify receive a small distribution during the primary period, equal to that of an uncontested primary candidate. This ensures that their campaigns can be active during the primary period. Second, the change gives budget writers timely information about how many candidates have qualified, and therefore what funds will likely be necessary during the election. Particularly in gubernatorial election years, it is very helpful to know the maximum number of candidates who will be eligible for Clean Election funding in the general election before the legislature adjourns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.