



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

PO Box 863
Augusta, ME 04332-0863

(207) 622-0256
lwwme@gwi.net

TO: The Honorable Senator Scott Cyrway
The Honorable Representative Louis Luchini, Co-chairs
The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: April 13, 2015

RE: LD 1127 An Act Regarding the Authority of the Secretary of State and the Attorney
General To Conduct Investigations of Vote Recounts

My name is Ann Luther. I am a resident of Trenton. I am here today as a volunteer member of the League's Advocacy Committee to testify *Neither-for-nor-Against* LD 1127, An Act Regarding the Authority of the Secretary of State and the Attorney General To Conduct Investigations of Vote Recounts.

The League of Women Voters has been active for almost 100 years, registering voters, encouraging civic participation, and upholding the highest standards in the conduct of elections. Along with many others, the League was concerned about the issues that surfaced in the recount in Maine Senate District 25. As we wrote to Senator Katz and the Special Elections Committee at the time, "The League of Women Voters advocate[s] for a nonpartisan process that counts every vote and preserves the integrity of the election. Maine people believe in democracy, and we are justifiably proud of our election systems. We have a long track record of high voter turnout. Maine people believe that our elections work and that elections matter. ... We don't expect that problems should never occur or that issues should never arise, but we do aspire to a process whereby those issues are addressed in such a manner that our faith in this system remains justified."

In the end, the Senate's Special Elections Committee did a fair and nonpartisan job of resolving the dispute in Senate District 25. But it was weeks after the recount before a final resolution occurred, and some of the speculation about what might have happened was damaging to our confidence in the election process. In addition, the two candidates and their constituents endured a roller coaster of victory and defeat.

We support measures that would allow the Secretary of State to act in the public interest during recounts and to take appropriate measures to ensure a timely and accurate conclusion to the recount process, including assurances that every vote is counted. The determination of whether to take these steps should not be left solely to the candidates' representatives. And a prompt result is important. Long delays and uncertainty in the outcome are detrimental to everyone involved and to the public interest.

We reserve judgment on the specific mechanisms suggested by this bill and hope you will receive comments on the technical aspects from others. But we urge you to find and pass the best solution among those presented this session.

Thank you.