



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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TO: Senator Nancy B. Sullivan, Senate Chair
Representative Pamela Jabar Trinward, House Chair
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs

DATE: April 6, 2009

RE: LD 1170 An Act To Ensure the Accuracy of Maine Election Results (Rep. Trinward,
Sponsor)

The League of Women Voters of Maine ("LWVME") is pleased to submit the following testimony in support of LD 1170.

The members of the League believe every citizen's right to vote must be protected. To do this, we support the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible. Recent controversies in other states regarding certain kinds of electronic voting equipment and problems with voting procedures have eroded public confidence in the integrity of our elections. Even here in Maine, where we take pride in high voter turnout and well-run elections, recent testimony regarding anomalies in counting write-in votes has reminded us that even the best voting systems and procedures can benefit from review and evidence-based improvement.

The League believes that mandatory random audits are essential to restoring the voters' confidence in the vote count around the country. We support routine audits in randomly selected precincts in every election, and we believe that the results should be published.

LD 1170 is a concept bill, so full particulars were not readily available to us in preparing for today's hearing. We are sympathetic to concerns that undertaking a full-blown program of random audits in Maine for all statewide elections would be a costly undertaking in an especially difficult fiscal climate.

If the purpose of LD 1170 is to formalize procedures for using currently-required election recounts as a way of conducting election audits with more limited scope and expense, the League supports that. Such a program would not fully satisfy the requirement for a random audit program. But if we can gather information from recounts to improve our election practices, we should surely do so.

Ann Luther, Co-president
League of Women Voters of Maine
6 April 2009

Founded in 1920, the League of The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major political policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.