



TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman
The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: February 3, 2025

RE: LD 175 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Ensure That Only Citizens of the United States May Participate in Elections

Good morning Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Al Cleveland. I am here today as the Advocacy Director of the League of Women Voters of Maine. The League of Women Voters is a consensus-based membership organization. At this time, we have no position on the merits of allowing non-citizens to vote in local elections; we oppose LD 175 on other grounds.

At present, the Constitution of Maine¹ protects the right of every citizen to vote in state elections. The rights of non-citizens are not constitutionally guaranteed. As permitted by the constitution, Maine law² then stipulates that non-citizens may not vote in Maine. Maine law is quite clear on this.

As presented, the text of LD 175 inverts the focus of our Constitution: rather than protecting the voting rights of citizens, the new provision would only deny those rights to non-citizens. Since non-citizens are not permitted to vote now, the switch in emphasis matters: our Constitution would no longer be as protective of voting rights for citizens as it is today, while having no practical effect on the voting rights of non-citizens. We object.

Today, citizenship is a requirement of both federal elections and state elections in all 50 states. A small number of localities in certain states, such as Maryland and Vermont, permit certain non-citizens to vote in some local elections. In Maine, our law does not afford non-citizens the right to vote in local elections, nor is the League aware of any pending measures that would seek to authorize it. For now, the merits of whether, and under what circumstances, non-citizens should be granted a limited right to vote in local elections remains largely a hypothetical issue for future discussion and consideration.

With this in mind, we oppose weakening the constitutional protections for citizen voters. We fully support the existing provisions in the Maine State Constitution that guarantee those rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

¹ Art. II, sec. 1

² 21-A M.R.S.A. sec. 111(1)