

To the Senate Rules Committee,

My wife, Zelda, no longer talks to her brothers. Doesn't trust them. She's a liberal, they're conservative. This division of our families is certainly more prevalent and intractable than COVID, and equally concerning as the events Jan 6 demonstrated. Pew research shows this polarization continues to increase. We need to solve this problem.

What is the intent of SB 791 and SB 343? If it is to help end this division, curtail gridlock, undercut gerrymandering, empower the voters, I offer that it will likely fall well short of the mark.

Under our current voting, we divide ourselves by joining candidate camps. We then fight against other camps trying to make ours the biggest. We use a full arsenal of political weapons to do this. Corporate funding, lawsuits, gerrymandering, fake news, libel, and slander. We must yell to be heard, but we do not listen to each other

Ranked-choice voting (SB 791 and SB 343) uses the same camps and encourage the battles as our current plurality voting system does, except at the end, it might dissolve a camp or two to redistribute those fighters in an effort mathematically create a >50% biggest camp.

A solution to solve our division should not include fighting, or creating a numerical majority, but simply asking the people what they want, how much they desire each option. If we define a set range upon which voters measure that desire, and then add it up for each candidate, we reveal which candidate voters most desire. No fighting, no political camps, simply a discovery and an implementation of the majority opinion. HB 3250 which would establish STAR Voting, does exactly this. Every voter scores every candidate and all of those scores go into identifying the voters most desired choice.

Ranked-choice voting was never intended or designed to improve society. From the official 2002 information provided to San Francisco voters, the goal was to end expensive, ill-attended, vitriolic re-elections. And it does that. But so does STAR Voting. And STAR Voting also encourages unity, deters both governmental gridlock and Gerrymandering, and delivers the people's most desired candidate.

Some may say STAR voting is untested, but Ranked-choice voting is not. Maine's first election with it in 2020 resulted in the most expensive Senate campaign in that state's history. Cary Weston, a partner at the Bangor marketing firm of Sutherland Weston, said about the fact that spending on political advertising in Maine was tracking to set a record high in the 2020 campaign, "It's loud, it's obnoxious, it's everywhere. I really don't think anyone's going to notice because it's so loud and obnoxious anyway." The Bangor Daily News noted that, "The [U.S. Senate] race between Collins and Democratic nominee Sara Gideon, which also included independents Lisa Savage and Max Linn, shattered state spending records, with more than \$200 million flowing into Maine through the candidates and outside groups, nine times more than any other political contest in the state's history."ⁱ They then summed up, "After some worry and a long legal fight, ranked-choice voting made no difference in the outcomes of Maine elections."ⁱⁱ

This isn't about picking a solution, it's about solving a problem.

SB 791 and SB 343, ranked-choice voting, show no capability to solve the problem suffered by its proponents and which serves as the reason for its introduction. HB 3250, STAR Voting, will. By rejecting SB 791 and SB 343 and embracing HB 3250, you will deliver the unity, stability, and sanity, that the

supporters of SB 791 and SB 343 most desire. Because of that, I strongly encourage the Senate Committee on Rules to reject SB 791 and SB 343.

Thank you for your service,

Tedman Getschman,

March 15, 2021

ⁱ Piper, J. (2020, December 30). The record spending in Maine's 2020 Senate race could be a sign of things to come. Retrieved February 09, 2021, from <https://bangordailynews.com/2020/12/30/politics/the-record-spending-in-maines-2020-senate-race-could-be-a-sign-of-things-to-come/>

ⁱⁱ Andrews C, Shepherd, M, Piper, J (2020, Nov 5) Maine's experiment with Ranked-Choice Voting was muted in 2020, Retrieved February 09,2021 from <https://bangordailynews.com/2020/11/05/politics/daily-brief/maines-experiment-with-ranked-choice-voting-was-muted-in-2020/>