



SHENNA BELLOWS
SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT
OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE

May 26, 2023

HAND DELIVERED

Matthew Pollack
Chief Executive Clerk
Maine Supreme Judicial Court
205 Newbury St., Room 139
Portland, ME 04101

Re: *In the Matter of Request for Opinion of the Justices*, OJ-23-1

Dear Mr. Pollack:

I am writing in connection with the above-captioned matter to inform the Court that Secretary of State Shenna Bellows concurs with all of the arguments set forth in the brief of Attorney General Aaron M. Frey.

Direct initiative of legislation by the people of Maine holds a special place in Maine's Constitution. *See Me. Const. art. IV, pt. 3 § 18.* The Secretary takes seriously her constitutional obligations related to initiated legislation, which includes facilitating the will of the people by "prepar[ing] the ballots in such form as to present the question[s] . . . intelligibly" to Maine voters. *Id.* §§ 18-20. Following the path offered in the Attorney General's brief provides the Secretary the best opportunity to fulfill her important constitutional duty of fidelity to the people's will under our Constitution's direct initiative process. The Secretary does not request time to be heard at oral argument.

Because the Secretary is not yet aware of which parties will participate in briefing this matter, I will monitor the Court's webpage and will provide electronic copies of this letter to all counsel for parties who offer a submission to the Court by the deadline set forth in its May 16, 2023, Procedural Order. I will also provide a copy of this letter to your office's email address as set forth in the same Procedural Order. Thank you for your attention and consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Suitter
Assistant Attorney General
Maine Bar No. 5736