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**Maine Unitarian Universalist
State Advocacy Network**

***Ballot Question #5: RANKED CHOICE VOTING
TALKING POINTS***

Establishes preferential voting for candidates for many State offices

Unitarian Universalist Principles:

- *Fifth Principle: The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and society at large*
 - *Second Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.*
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Voters should be able to support any candidate without fearing that by doing so s/he may be wasting his/her vote and allowing an undesirable major candidate to win.

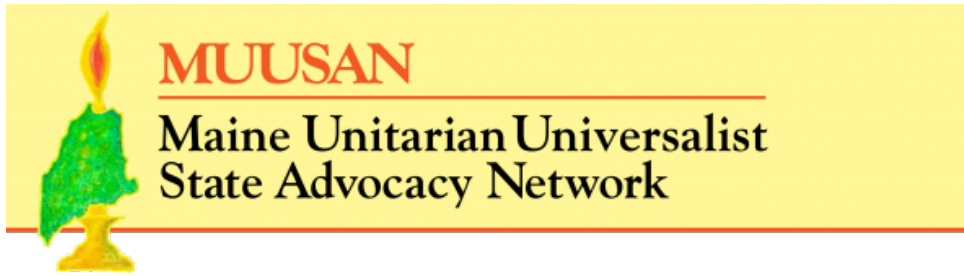
You should never have to vote for the “lesser of two evils” when there is another candidate you really like. Ranked choice voting eliminates that dilemma. Under this system, people state their first, second, third etc. choices. If your first choice candidate does not win and no candidate has a majority of the ballots cast, then your vote is added to the total received by the candidate you selected as your second choice. This continues as an “instant runoff” process until one candidate has received a majority of the total number of the votes cast.

Maine should always have elected officials who represent a majority of the voters, rather than just who gets more votes than the others.

In nine of the last 11 elections for Governor, candidates were elected with less than a majority of the votes cast. It is difficult to govern well when you do not get the support of the majority of the voters. We should eliminate the “spoiler” phenomenon.

Ranked choice election campaigning is more positive in nature and promotes greater public support for the democratic process

You are not likely to rank as your second place a candidate who has issued personal attacks against your favorite candidate. Experience in Portland, Maine showed that there was less negativity and more focus on the real issues under a system where ranked choice voting is in place. In turn, that leads to broader involvement in the electoral process, and greater voter turnout for elections.



Ballot Question #4: RAISE MINIMUM WAGE — TALKING POINTS

Increases minimum wage to \$12 per hour by 2020

Unitarian Universalist Principles:

- *First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
 - *Second Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations*
 - *Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*
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Maine people work full time at minimum wage jobs and yet are not able to support a family.

“The annual take-home pay (after taxes) for a minimum wage worker averages under \$300 a week. Nobody can live on that little money, much less support a family. Low wages mean working parents in Maine can’t support children and seniors can’t afford to retire.” — Maine Peoples Alliance (MPA), <https://www.mainepeoplesalliance.org/fairwagemaine>

The initiative supports parents, children, and families.

According to Maine Peoples Alliance, one in four working mothers in Maine work at minimum wage jobs. As many as 52,000 Maine children live in a household in which a parent would earn more for her or his family with an increased minimum wage.

Both points above: UU Principles of inherent worth and dignity of every person, and justice, equity and compassion in human relations support this initiative.

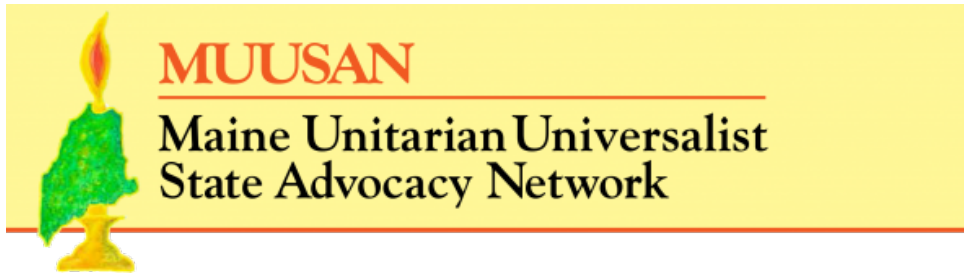
Many of our hardest working public service employees earn less than \$12 an hour.

“In Maine, tens of thousands of Maine’s highly skilled EMTs, firefighters, preschool teachers, and elderly and disabled care providers get paid less than \$12 an hour. These jobs are crucial to our communities’ well-being, and should be compensated with a decent paycheck that can support a family.” — MPA

All of us in Maine gain when folks earn more in minimum wage jobs.

The initiative will support local economies as families who earn more will spend more in their communities and thus support small and local businesses. In turn, more jobs will be created. When families earn more, they spend it in their communities at local businesses. According to the Maine Peoples Alliance, many of the small businesses in Maine support this initiative. You may find a list of supporters at this link: <http://www.mainesmallbusiness.org/fairwagemap>.

Both points above: The UU principle of respect for the interdependent web of all existence supports the initiative.



Ballot Question 3: BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR FIREARMS TALKING POINTS

Closes legal loophole for 40% of Maine firearm sales or transfers not now requiring background checks

Unitarian Universalist Principles:

- *First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
 - *Second Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations*
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Background checks work to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.

In states that require them for all handgun sales, there are fewer women shot to death by intimate partners, fewer law enforcement officers killed with handguns, less gun trafficking, and fewer gun suicides. Since 1998, background checks have prevented more than 2.4 million felons, domestic abusers, people with severe mental illness, and other dangerous people from getting guns nationwide — including over 5,500 here in Maine.

Background checks will reduce gun violence in Maine.

Maine's gun laws still make it all too easy for dangerous people, including felons, domestic abusers, and people with dangerous mental illness, to get their hands on guns. The evidence is clear: ***Between 2004 and 2013, 132 Maine residents were murdered with guns, and an additional 1,040 killed themselves with firearms. And there is a particularly deadly relationship between guns and domestic violence in Maine: in 42 percent of all gun homicides committed in Maine in 2013, the perpetrator was a former or current intimate partner or family member of the victim.*** Additionally, criminals and gun traffickers exploit Maine laws to buy guns in Maine, and a large number of Maine guns end up in dangerous hands and are used in crimes throughout New England.

Background checks affirm the Maine tradition of responsible gun ownership.

Maine has a strong tradition of responsible gun ownership, and this initiative honors that tradition by allowing reasonable exceptions from the background check requirement — for transfers to family members, while hunting, and for self-defense. Maine needs to become the next state **to close a loophole** in the law that makes it easy to anonymously buy guns online, at a gun show or through classified ads with no background check. **This initiative will close the loophole, so that everyone buying a gun in Maine gets the same criminal background check, no matter where they buy it or who they buy it from.**



Ballot Question #2: STAND UP FOR STUDENTS — TALKING POINTS

Establishes a provision to support public education by taxing a 3% surcharge on the portion of any household income exceeding \$200,000 per year

Unitarian Universalist Principles:

- *First Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
 - *Fourth Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning*
 - *Seventh Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*
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What is Question 2, and what does it do?

The ballot question: "Do you want to add a 3% tax on individual Maine taxable income above \$200,000 to create a state fund that would provide direct support for student learning in kindergarten through 12th grade public education?"

In 2003, Maine voters (by a majority of 72%) passed a referendum calling immediately for the **state to pay for 55% of the cost of operating public schools**, as a way to reduce pressure on local property taxes. **That percentage has never been met.** To approach that target, **Stand Up for Students** has brought a ballot initiative to implement a 3% surcharge in Maine income taxes on the portion of any household income exceeding \$200,000 per year. *Michael Hillard, University of Southern Maine economics professor: "We're asking our top earners to pay a little bit more to help fund our most common and essential public good — the education of our children. This initiative is good for taxpayers and good for Maine."*

The proposed law requires that this money MUST be used for direct classroom instruction, including materials and equipment, as well as teachers, school nurses and other critical public school personnel.

The initiative supports public education and students' search for truth and meaning while supporting the dignity of students – even students who live in communities with fewer resources to support local public schools.

The initiative contributes to a strong economic future for all Mainers by supporting a well-educated workforce that will attract jobs to our state and allow our children to stay and succeed in Maine. Moreover, the proposal will support students' ability to make choices for their own lives and to contribute to family, civic, and community life.

The initiative recognizes that we are all responsible for the education of Maine's children and youth and thus relates to the interdependent web of existence.

Source: Stand Up for Students; Yes! On Question 2 <http://standupforstudentsmaine.org/>