



Testimony of Maine Conservation Voters

“An Act to Assist Clerks in Facilitating Elections and to Improve Access to In-person Absentee Voting for Working People by Increasing Time for Absentee Ballot Processing and In-person Voting”

Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

March 13, 2023

My name is Will Sedlack, Political Director at Maine Conservation Voters, writing in support of LD 812, “An Act to Assist Clerks in Facilitating Elections and to Improve Access to In-person Absentee Voting for Working People by Increasing Time for Absentee Ballot Processing and In-person Voting” on behalf of more than 13,000 members and supporters of Maine Conservation Voters. Maine Conservation Voters works to build an inclusive democracy and to make conservation and climate action a political priority. We support measures that make voting more efficient, secure, and accessible for all eligible Maine voters and oppose those that do not achieve that profoundly American goal.

This bill would make voting more efficient, secure, and accessible for all eligible Maine voters. In particular, we wish to applaud Rep. Skold for his work on this bill. We strongly support expanding the window for processing absentee ballots from 7 to 14 days and believe this is a common sense change that will improve the lives of Maine’s town and city clerks while ensuring a positive voter experience.

We also strongly support municipalities providing an opportunity for in-person voting on the weekends. In the spirit of ensuring success for the proposals laid out in this legislation, we wish to recommend a few changes that we believe would lead to more predictable, uniform voting experiences for Mainers and hopefully alleviate any potential confusion that might arise during the expansion of in-person voting opportunities.

1. Amend “...the clerk shall provide an opportunity for absentee voting in the presence of the clerk for at least 8 hours on one Saturday and 8 hours on one Sunday within 18 days before the date of the election.” to “the clerk shall provide an opportunity for absentee voting in the presence of the clerk for at least 8 hours on the Saturday ten days before the date of an election.”

2. Amend “In a municipality with a population greater than 7,000...” to “In a municipality with a population greater than 3,000...”

We believe the changes listed above will allow for clear state-wide communication about early voting opportunities, reduce voter confusion about what opportunities are available, and ensure the efficient allocation of municipal staffing against the demand for in-person voting

With the recommendations listed above, Maine Conservation Voters urges you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 812.

Thank you.

William D. Sedlack, J.D.
Political Director
Maine Conservation Voters