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Legislative Document

No. 580

H.P. 423

House of Representatives, February 24, 2021

RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Regarding Early Voting

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 22, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

R(+ B. Hunt

Presented by Representative MORIARTY of Cumberland.

Constitutional amendment. Resolved: Two thirds of each branch of the Legislature concurring, that the following amendment to the Constitution of Maine be proposed:

Constitution, Art. II, §4 is amended to read:

Section 4. Time of state election; <u>early voting;</u> absentee voting. The election of Senators and Representatives shall be on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November biennially forever and the election of Governor shall be on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November every 4 years. <u>The Legislature by proper enactment may authorize a process by which municipalities may conduct early voting by allowing voters to vote in the same manner as on election day during a prescribed period immediately preceding an election. The Legislature <u>under by proper enactment shall authorize and provide for voting by absentee ballot by citizens of the State absent therefrom in the Armed Forces of the United States or of this State and for voting <u>by absentee ballot</u> by other citizens absent or physically incapacitated for any reasons deemed sufficient.</u></u>

Constitutional referendum procedure; form of question; effective date. Resolved: That the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question:

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to allow the Legislature to authorize a process by which a municipality may conduct early voting in the same manner as on election day during a period immediately preceding an election?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within the corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns. If it appears that a majority of the legal votes are cast in favor of the amendment, the Governor shall proclaim that fact without delay and the amendment becomes part of the Constitution of Maine on the date of the proclamation.

Secretary of State shall prepare ballots. Resolved: That the Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this resolution necessary to carry out the purposes of this referendum.

36 SUMMARY

This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to allow the Legislature to authorize a process by which municipalities may conduct early voting by allowing voters to vote in the same manner as on election day during a period immediately preceding an election and to allow absentee voting for any sufficient reason.