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An Act To Update Absentee Ballot Procedures

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, domestic partners are not included in the definition of immediate family members for the purposes of requesting an absentee ballot; and

Whereas, many citizens of the State have taken advantage of the domestic partner laws; and

Whereas, these domestic partners are unable to request absentee ballots for their partners under the current law; and

Whereas, the next election will take place before the general effective date of legislation passed by the 123rd Legislature; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §1, sub-§20, as amended by PL 2001, c. 310, §1, is further amended to read:

20. Immediate family. "Immediate family" means a person's spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sister, brother, stepparent, stepgrandparent, stepchild, stepgrandchild, stepsister, stepbrother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, guardian or former guardian or domestic partner as defined in Title 22, section 2710, subsection 2.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

Current law provides that an immediate family member may request an absentee ballot for a person. This bill amends the definition of "immediate family member" under the election laws to include domestic partners.