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VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

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**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
132ND LEGISLATURE
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 753, L.D. 1148, “An Act to Improve Access to Absentee Ballots for Municipal Elections for Uniformed Service Voters and Overseas Voters”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, Directing the Secretary of State to Study Providing Access to Absentee Ballots for Municipal Elections to Uniformed Service Voters or Overseas Voters in the Same Manner as Absentee Ballots for Statewide Elections'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Sec. 1. Department of Secretary of State to study providing access to absentee ballots for municipal elections to uniformed service voters or overseas voters in same manner as absentee ballots for statewide elections. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall study the feasibility of and methods for providing digital access to and receipt of local absentee ballots for uniformed service voters or overseas voters from a municipality holding an election on the same date as a statewide election. In conducting this study, the Department of the Secretary of State may consult with members of an association representing town and city clerks.

Sec. 2. Department of Secretary of State to update information provided to uniformed service voters or overseas voters regarding access to and return of local absentee ballots. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall update its publicly accessible website or the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act absentee ballot retrieval service portal, as applicable, to include clearly and conspicuously that local absentee ballots must be obtained from the uniformed service voter's or overseas voter's municipality of residence and that the process for applying for, receiving and returning absentee ballots through the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act absentee ballot retrieval service portal applies only to statewide and federal elections. The Secretary of State shall make easily accessible the contact information for each municipality in the State.

Sec. 3. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 3, 2025, the Secretary of State shall submit a report based upon the study in section 1, including an update on the information required under section 2, along with any recommended legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, which may report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.'

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve that directs the Department of the Secretary of State to study the feasibility of and methods for providing digital access to and receipt of local absentee ballots for uniformed service voters or overseas voters from a municipality holding an election on the same date as a statewide election. The department must also update its publicly accessible website and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act absentee ballot retrieval service portal to include information explaining that local absentee ballots are not included as a part of this service and that a uniformed service voter or overseas voter must obtain absentee ballots for local elections from the voter's municipality of residence. The department must provide contact information for each municipality on its website.

The Secretary of State shall submit a report of the findings, including recommended legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs by December 3, 2025. The report must also include an update on the changes to the website and the portal. The committee may report out legislation related to the report in the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)