

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE

—
H.P. 252 - L.D. 419

Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Study Polling Places at Schools in Order to Protect Security and Accessibility

Preamble. **Whereas**, the Legislature finds that school buildings are ideal locations to serve as polling places due to their central locations, accessible parking and compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and

Whereas, most school buildings are also equipped with a gymnasium, which offers ample space and allows for the flow of foot traffic in a polling place; and

Whereas, school buildings are often the only locations within a community that can serve as a polling place for that community, but schools also require strong security at all times in order to protect students and staff and on election day to protect election staff and voters; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Working group to study polling places at schools. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall convene a working group, referred to in this resolve as "the working group," to study the use of school buildings as polling places, to consider options to protect the security of school students and staff and election staff and voters and to consider polling place accessibility.

Sec. 2. Working group membership. Resolved: That the working group consists of 9 members as follows:

1. The Secretary of State or the secretary's designee;
2. The deputy secretary of state of the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions within the Department of the Secretary of State or the deputy secretary's designee;
3. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee;
4. A representative of the Maine School Boards Association, appointed by the Secretary of State;
5. A representative of the Maine School Superintendents Association, appointed by the Secretary of State;

6. A representative of the Maine Town and City Clerks' Association, appointed by the Secretary of State;

7. A representative of the Maine Municipal Association, appointed by the Secretary of State;

8. A representative of an organization dedicated to advancing the legal rights of individuals with disabilities, appointed by the Secretary of State; and

9. A representative of an organization dedicated to the protection of voters who are from historically underrepresented or marginalized communities, appointed by the Secretary of State.

Sec. 3. Compensation. Resolved: That members of the working group are not compensated for their participation in the working group.

Sec. 4. Duties. Resolved: That the working group shall:

1. Identify the number of school buildings in the State that are designated as polling places;

2. Examine and identify practices in other states around the use of school buildings as polling places;

3. Evaluate the criteria necessary to protect the security of school students and staff and election staff and voters when school buildings are used as polling places;

4. Identify possible changes to practices around the use of school buildings as polling places to protect voter accessibility and to safeguard the security of school students and staff and election staff and voters when a school building is used as a polling place; and

5. Make recommendations based on the findings of the working group.

Sec. 5. Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall provide necessary staffing services to the working group.

Sec. 6. Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 1, 2024, the working group shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs. The committee may report out legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature.