

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Nicole Clegg and I serve as the Senior Vice President of Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and I am pleased to submit testimony in opposition to LD 34.

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England provides comprehensive reproductive and sexual health care to more than 14,000 people in Maine at four health centers located in Biddeford, Portland, Sanford and Topsham. People turn to us for affordable, high-quality care including wellness exams, birth control, disease testing and treatment, cancer screenings, abortion care as well as a variety of primary care services. We see everyone who comes to us regardless of ability to pay, and in a typical year, we provide more than \$4 million in free and discounted care to our communities in Maine.

As a mission driven health care provider, we fundamentally believe everyone should be able to get affordable, high quality sexual and reproductive health care in their communities, no matter where they live or how much money they make and we advocate for policies that help make this vision a reality. As a healthcare provider which often works with marginalized populations we are incredibly troubled by the proposals before this committee to introduce a photo ID requirement for voting.

This proposal ostensibly serves to address a problem, in-person Voter impersonation, that does not in-fact exist to any significant extent in our state. Even the conservative Heritage Foundation, which has put significant resources toward researching voter fraud and election irregularities in every state, cannot find statistically significant evidence of voter impersonation in Maine¹.

While the problem LD 34 seeks to alleviate does not to any measurable extent exist, the proposal itself, would, if enacted, have a significant impact in reducing voter turnout by eligible Mainers. A 2014 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, found that voter ID reduced turnout in Kansas and Tennessee by as much as 3%. That would have translated to the suppression of over 27,000 eligible Maine voters in 2020².

Not only would such a requirement carry with it the potential to suppress the votes of otherwise eligible voters, it would do so in such a way as to disproportionately affect disadvantaged populations; weighing most heavily on those segments of our state already

¹ [Link to Heritage Foundation Breakdown of "Voter Fraud"](#)

² ["Elections: Issues Related to State Voter Identification Laws"](#) US Government Accountability Office, published 9/19/2014

underrepresented in the electorate particularly BIPOC Mainers; Young Mainers; disabled Mainers and economically disadvantaged Mainers.

If the goal of this proposal is to strengthen Maine's already safe and secure elections, we urge the Legislature to instead work to expand access to ongoing absentee voting, increase support for election workers, and provide additional funding for state and local election administrators to have sufficient trained staff as well as implementing other updates to modernize our elections and elections infrastructure.

In closing, the imposition of a photo ID requirement for voting is not just wrong for Maine, it is offensive to the founding ethos of this state and this country. Democracy isn't transactional, and polling places aren't retail stores. Their locations, processes, and costs are not supposed to be easily accessible for some but severely out of reach for others. The freedom to vote without regard to race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability or economic status is fundamental to our democracy, it is what binds us together as a people, as a state and as a county. For all these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote not to pass LD 34.