



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 34

**Presented to Maine Legislature
Joint Standing Committee
On Veterans and Legal Affairs**

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Chair Hickman, Chair Supica, and honorable members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Madeline Malisa, and I'm a visiting fellow at the Opportunity Solutions Project. OSP is a non-partisan, non-profit organization. We work in more than 40 states across the country with one clear goal—to help more people achieve the American Dream. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today in support of this legislation.

Mainers are passionate about the fundamental right that we all have as Americans to vote and participate in our democratic process. We don't want loopholes and weaknesses in the design of elections to threaten that right. No voter should have their vote canceled out or diluted by an improper vote.

LD 34 will require that voters present a photo ID when they vote in person. It will also ensure a free voter ID is provided to any Mainer who needs one. Voter ID is the single most effective and secure way to verify a voter's identity. It does this in a very practical way. It simply requires that a voter prove they are who they say they are. It removes the problems of guesswork or lack of training inherent in other verification processes, which can lead to improper votes being counted and legal votes being rejected.

Voter ID requirements are also important for voter confidence. Voters need to have confidence in the election process in order to have confidence in the election results. They want to know that they are voting in free, fair, and secure elections.

Of course, showing an ID isn't groundbreaking or new for residents in Maine. Anyone who has ever been checked into a hospital, picked up a prescription, opened a bank account, or bought a beer knows that producing an ID is just a normal part of everyday life. For residents who do not have an ID, offering a free voter ID provides an easy option to meet this requirement.

Voter ID laws have been widely enacted across the country. Currently, Maine is one of only 15 states where voters can cast their ballot without showing an ID document. This is a significant vulnerability in the election process.

In 35 states, voters must show some type of ID document to vote.¹ Under a strict ID requirement, voters without acceptable identification will vote on provisional ballots and then return to an election office within a few days to show an acceptable ID. Other northeastern states have this requirement like New Hampshire and Rhode Island.²

Just this month, Ohio enacted comprehensive voter ID requirements for both in-person and absentee voting. In 2022, Florida, South Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri all passed bills to strengthen their voter ID laws. This session, voter ID bills have been introduced in Nebraska, Virginia, and West Virginia.

To give you an international perspective, 46 of 47 European countries require some form of identification to vote.³ The exception is the United Kingdom, which will begin requiring photo ID in May 2023.⁴ Our regional neighbors, Canada and Mexico, both require photo ID and countries across the world to do as well, including Argentina, India, and Israel.⁵

Voter ID is good policy and it is clear that Americans agree. Nationally, nearly eight in 10 Americans support photo ID requirements and consider election integrity and security very important to them.⁶ Voter ID laws are popular for a reason—voters understand that they increase security in the process and certainty in the outcome.

In closing, I commend the sponsor for introducing this important legislation. Public access to and public confidence in the integrity of elections are fundamental components of enduring freedom. When Mainers cast their ballots, they deserve to know that their votes will count. I appreciate your time today and I'm happy to answer any questions.

¹ National Conference of State Legislatures, "Voter ID laws," NCSL (2022), <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>.

² *Ibid.*

³ John R. Lott, Jr., "In Europe, voter ID is the norm," The Daily Signal (June 1, 2021), <https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/06/01/in-europe-voter-id-is-the-norm>.

⁴ "Voter ID," The UK Electoral Commission, (February 2023), <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>, "ID to vote," Elections Canada, (February 2023), <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=vot&dir=ids&document=index&lang=e>, David Agren, "Mexico's national voter IDs part of culture," (January 25, 2012), <https://archive.ph/20161128022908/http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2012-01-22/mexico-national-voter-ID-cards/52779410/1#selection-585.0-585.43>.

⁵ "Voter Identification Requirements and Public International Law: An Examination of Africa and Latin America," The Carter Center, <https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/democracy/des/voter-identification-requirements.pdf>, "Who can vote in Indian," The Economic Times, (September 18, 2022), https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/elections/lok-sabha/india/who-can-vote-in-india/articleshow/68793337.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst, "Israel Elections Voter Identification," Anglo-List, (January 13, 2013), <https://anglo-list.com/your-voting-slip>.

⁶ Center for Excellence in Polling, "2022 National Election Security Poll," (June 2022), <https://excellenceinpolling.com/poll/2022-national-election-security-poll>.