

Victor Trepanier

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Testimony Against LD 34: An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for  
the Purpose of Voting

Presented to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs - my name is Victor Trepanier, and I'm a resident of Augusta and Vice President of the Hallowell Pride Alliance. I'm writing today to testify against the passage of LD 34: An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting .

Voting is a sacred part of our democracy, and often the only way citizens are able to participate in it. It is thus of vital importance that we protect it. I feel that this bill, however, dangerously restricts who is able to vote. It would create hurdles for many people - the working class, those fleeing domestic violence, and transgender individuals to name a few.

Transgender folks have come increasingly under attack in state legislatures and on the federal level for the past few years. Though this bill, on its face, says nothing about transgender folks, I believe it presents a clear danger to those identifying as such. The need for photo identification means that someone might have to present an ID that no longer fully represents them. If an individual is medically transitioning, not only may their personal style have changed, but hormone replacement therapy quite literally changes a person's facial structure. Then a transgender person may be forced to be scrutinized by someone (once again) - and perhaps treated like a liar, a stereotype too often forced upon us. The uncomfortability and humiliation of that situation can be a very real deterrent for transgender folks, who are forced to choose between keeping themselves safe and being a part of our democracy.

A response may be to tell that person to simply get a new ID, but that process that so many people take for granted is not that simple. Getting an ID requires time in an office, such as the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. It requires money to pay for a new ID. It may also require losing

money if someone must take time off of work. Transgender folks, because of how they are mistreated and denied opportunities all too often, are frequently among the poor and working class - a day off of work is not feasible for many (and this is true for cisgender folks in the same socioeconomic status).

I understand that Section 2 of this bill proposes that the Secretary of State's office be required to provide new photographic identification free of charge for the express purpose of voting. I question how "free" that actually will be though - it would be all too easy for one to upload a misleading photograph, leading me to believe that more than likely an individual would need to physically go to an office to get a card, leading to similar hurdles with obtaining a driver's license. This, I realize, is speculation, but we would be remiss not to think of these provisions in action.

Finally I would like to say that this bill is just completely unnecessary. Voter fraud rhetoric and misinformation has been rife since the last presidential election. In the 2020 election, there were very minimal cases of voting fraud - only two I believe (neither of which had to do with impersonation). Is it really necessary to create another hurdle to voting for a virtual non-existent problem? Especially when our voter turnout is already so low?

Though I am testifying on the behalf of transgender individuals like myself, I truly believe LD 34 could be restrictive for many Mainers. I hope that you will also see that it is an unnecessary and harmful bill, and will not vote to pass it.

Thank you.