



Maine Education Association

Grace Leavitt President | Jesse Hargrove Vice President | Beth French Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director | Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

Testimony

In Opposition

LD 34: An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting
LD 237: An Act to Require a Registered Voter to Update the Registration

John Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before Representative Supica and other members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

February 6, 2023

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and other members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is John Kosinski and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Education Association (MEA) in opposition to LD 34, An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting and LD 237, An Act to Require a Registered Voter to Update the Registration. The MEA represents 24,000 educators in Maine, including teachers and other staff in nearly every public-school district in the state, and faculty and other professional staff in the University of Maine and Community College systems.

Every day, educators across the state teach students about the power and purpose of American democracy. Our schools celebrate our nation's democratic systems, and educators attempt to instill in students the need to exercise their civic duty to vote and fully participate in our country's democratic institutions. We know our country thrives when voters exercise their right to vote. Only then do we know our elected officials truly reflect the decisions of the people they are elected to serve.

In this context, we find it disconcerting and troubling to see legislative proposals before this body designed to limit and/or interfere with the ability for Maine people to vote. Both LD 34 and LD 237 will undoubtedly do just that. They both represent new obstacles to voting, and will serve to disenfranchise voters. And these bills are wholly unnecessary. There is no evidence of voter fraud in Maine's election. In fact, Maine is often a leader in the country in terms of voter turnout. Our electoral systems are healthy and fair. We might not always like the outcomes, and there is a new troubling trend from unsuccessful candidates challenging the integrity of voting systems, but claims of voter fraud in Maine are specious at best.

These bills are the quintessential solution in search of a problem. But the "solutions" proposed in LD 34 and LD 237 will have negative repercussions for Maine people. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, if these proposals are enacted, some voters will be unnecessarily disenfranchised.

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For these reasons, we hope the Committee will vote “ought not to pass” on LD 34 and LD 237. In the meantime, educators around the state will continue the work of educating students about our history’s fragile and unique democracy, and the need for all Americans to exercise their civic duty to vote.

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