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## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

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Local Government Center • 60 Community Drive  
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Date: March 21, 2023

To: Senator Craig Hickman, Senate Chair  
Representative Laura Supica, House Chair  
And members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Jacob Gran, Member of the Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association

Re: LD 1022 – An Act to Allow School Budget Referenda on the Same Day as  
Primary Elections

Position: Support

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association supports LD 1022 and we thank you for the opportunity to outline our points for your Committee.

It is the responsibility of the municipal clerk to administer and supervise elections in accordance with Title 21-A, Title 30-A, and Title 20-A.

Current law allows a regional school unit to select any date for its district budget meeting. The budget validation referendum must occur on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the budget meeting. Absentee ballots are to be delivered to the municipal clerk no later than the day after the budget meeting. A regional school unit is not required to hold the budget validation referendum in conjunction with other state and local elections on the second Tuesday in June.

An additional budget validation referendum results in lower turnout, duplication of work, increases costs and difficulty in scheduling workers.

Title 21-A and 30-A require that absentee ballots be available for 30 days prior to an election. Although Title 20-A requires the school validation vote to take place on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the district budget meeting, it does not require that absentee ballots be available to voters for 30 days prior to the vote. Even if the state election and school election are held on the same day, a duplication in mailing of ballots occurs when the district budget meeting is held within the 30 days of a state election. Clerks must also track these ballots separate.

This process is confusing for the voters and creates the potential for voter disenfranchisement.



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Giving the municipality the option of requiring that the budget validation referendum be held on the second Tuesday in June will improve voter turnout, will greatly reduce the workload on the municipal clerk, and will reduce overall costs. Furthermore, having the option of requiring that the district budget meeting be held at least 45 days prior to the election will ensure that the absentee process is consistent with that which is already outlined in state law.

Clerks suggest that the committee also consider the following amendments to §1486 of Title 20-A:

- Strike the phrase, "on the day after the conclusion of the regional school unit budget meeting and" from subsection 3. D., leaving the sentence to read: "Absentee ballots received by the municipal clerk may not be processed or counted unless received before the close of the polls." And,
- Strike the phrase, "before the day after the conclusion of the regional school unit budget meeting or" from subsection 3. E., leaving the sentence to read: "All envelopes containing absentee ballots received after the close of the polls must be marked 'rejected' by the municipal clerk."

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association appreciates the opportunity to share its testimony with the Committee. Should any questions arise, please feel free to contact me at (207) 469-7368 or by email: [jgran@bucksportmaine.gov](mailto:jgran@bucksportmaine.gov).