



## Maine Town & City Clerks' Association

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Date: January 22, 2024

To: Senator Tim Nangle, Senate Chair  
Representative Holly Stover, House Chair  
And members of the State and Local Government Committee

From: Patti Dubois, Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town and City Clerks' Association  
Ashley Rand, Vice-Chairperson, Legislative Policy Committee  
Maine Town & City Clerks Association

Re: LD 53 – An Act to Establish the November General Election as a State  
Holiday  
Amendment 2/7/25: School Holiday

Position: Neither For Nor Against

The Maine Town & City Clerks' Association is neither for nor against LD 53, and we thank you for the opportunity to outline our points for your committee.

It is our understanding that the intention of this bill is to encourage better voter participation by allowing voters time off from work to be able to vote. Our research indicates that 19 states currently have some form of holiday on Election Day, but a comparison of those states to others that do not have Election Day holidays indicates there is no relationship between Election Day holidays and higher voter turnout.

### Points to consider in support of Election Day as a State Holiday:

- Could allow for more availability of citizens to work at the polls if their place of employment is closed for the day.
- Many school gymnasiums serve as polling places, so additional parking would be available if the students and teachers are not present.
- Open doors and increased public foot traffic present much less of a security risk if children and teachers are not present during polling hours.
- Potential availability of town office staff from other departments to work at the polls if the holiday is recognized by the municipality.

### Points to consider in opposition of Election Day as a State Holiday:

- Having the holiday on even-numbered years will mean the holiday will only be recognized every two years which will be confusing for everyone; consistency is paramount.
- Increased costs for polling place set up and clean up - Public Works crews will need to

- be paid at the holiday rate of pay which can be time and a half or double timepay.
- Increased costs for the municipal clerk employees and other municipal office employees who work at the polls - will need to be paid holiday rate
- Increased costs for the Secretary of State Office employees who will need to work on Election Day and may need to be paid holiday rate.
- Increased cost for overtime for building staff to open buildings used for polling places, if now closed due to holiday (schools, libraries, town offices).
- Some schools that are polling places might be opposed to it - they already lose several educational instruction days during November - Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving break. To be closed for yet another day might be difficult on students and teachers. For many low-income students, they rely on the schools to provide their breakfast and lunch meals each day. Being closed could create a hardship for these students.
- Many businesses may choose not to honor the holiday due to the cost of payroll expenses and may not be closed for the day; it will not be financially advantageous for businesses to pay employees for an eight-hour holiday in place of work; businesses may not want to lose a day of productivity and work.
- Schools will be closed on Election Day and this could create hardship and additional day care expenses for parents who will still need to work during the day. Parents who need to send children to daycare for the day may pay \$50 - \$75, per child for this one day.
- By state law, all polling places are open until 8pm and if employees work a typical 9am to 5pm job, they can vote after work. Many polling places open early such as 6am or 7am and employees can vote before work.
- Absentee ballots are always available at least 30 days before Election Day, so if someone has to work the entire time polls are open, they can obtain an absentee ballot in advance of Election Day and be able to vote. Obtaining an absentee ballot is as easy as making a two-minute phone call or going online for two minutes to place an order. The ballots are sent directly to the voter and are voted at the convenience of the voter anytime during those 30 days.

Thank you for allowing us to outline our thoughts and opinions regarding the logistical applications of this bill.

The MaineTown & 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)680-4210 or by email at [pdubois@waterville-me.gov](mailto:pdubois@waterville-me.gov) .