



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the Committee on**

**In Opposition of LD 349 - An Act to Repeal the Laws
That Allow Same-day Voter Registration**

Submitted 2/24/2025

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

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 135 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings.

I am writing in opposition of LD 349.

Greetings Senator, Representative and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs. I am writing in opposition to LD 349 An Act to Repeal the Laws That Allow Same-day Voter Registration because we are concerned that this legislation will have the unintended consequence of disenfranchising older Maine citizens who are already experiencing challenges in exercising their constitutional right to vote. These are our neighbors, friends, former teachers and scout leaders; they have helped to build our communities and should not be denied the right to vote.

Consider these facts:

- More than 193,000 people in Maine are age 70 or older; more than 66,000 of these people are over 80.
- According to Maine's 2025 Strategic Transit Plan, 72% of older Mainers live in communities without access to fixed route transit or one of the larger flex route transit systems.

There can be no question that older people value their independence above all else. In most of Maine, the ability to drive is inexorably linked to one's independence, so most people hold onto their driver's licenses as long as possible. Still, thousands of older Mainers stop driving each year due to age or illness, either voluntarily or otherwise. In 2019, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimated that about 17% of people 70 and older did not have a driver's license. In Maine, this translates to about 33,000 people age 70 and older who do not hold a current driver's license. And this estimate was made before COVID!

Older people who don't drive or have access to public transportation have to rely on others to get to medical appointments, church, the grocery store, the bank, and to the hairdresser. They also have to arrange a ride to the polls to vote. If they don't live with a spouse or adult relative, they have to rely on family, friends, and neighbors to meet their basic transportation needs.

Mainers are an independent lot- none of us want to impose on others. We ask for help when we have to, but we only ask when we have no other options and we try hard not to burden others. Many of us would rather go without before putting someone else out. So, while many of us will be compelled to ask for

rides to medical appointments and to get groceries when we can no longer drive, most of us won't likely ask for rides that aren't completely necessary.

Imagine that an older person, who does not drive, is moving in with a family member or an apartment complex in a different community. Getting a ride on election day to the polls is one thing- but figuring out when Voter Registration ends in a particular community and getting a ride to Register is an additional step that may cause a person to give up and not vote.

Further, we are concerned about the language in Sec. 6. Allowing an unlimited number of poll monitors who are able to handle registration cards and files could create a sense of chaos in the polling place. This is exacerbated by not allowing the Warden to remove a person who is inhibiting the work at the polling place.

Mainers, especially older Mainers, have a particular trust in our elections and hold the polling place and process in high regard. Same day registration in Maine has been in place since 1973 without issues. Maine has one of the highest percentages of older voters in the country. We should be proud about this level of voter engagement and should be doing everything possible to ensure that older Mainers continue to have access to this precious right even as their ability to get around declines. It makes no sense to enact a law that would significantly interfere with the ability of thousands of older voters to exercise this constitutional right. We urge you to vote in opposition to this bill.

If this bill is intended to avoid voter fraud, we urge the Committee to find a more surgical way to address specific incidents of voter fraud than to impose a requirement that will impact a significant number of older people who have every right to cast their ballot.

Thank you.