



TO: The Honorable Joseph Rafferty
The Honorable Kelly Murphy
Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

DATE: March 10, 2025

RE: LD 734 - An Act to Promote Voter Registration for Students in Maine's High Schools

Good morning Senator Rafferty and Representative Murphy,

My name is Julia Wardrop, I'm a resident of Scarborough, and I am testifying in favor of LD 734.

This bill is a necessary step in the direction of motivating and encouraging students to be active participants in our local and national democracy. As a current high school student, I have first hand experience with being severely affected by political decisions, but not able to vote on them. For this reason, it is important that we empower students to register to vote, so that when the time comes, they are fully equipped to voice their opinions and contribute to the discussions around politics that will affect them. Along with this, my school has a registration drive every year, and I am able to see firsthand how it helps students register to vote, without having to worry about doing it by themselves. Currently, rural counties are registering a much smaller percentage of their students, compared to the urban communities (Brill). This is an issue that must be addressed, so that all citizens have their constitutional right to participate in our democracy.

I am aware that the ability and finance of schools is also a legitimate concern, which is why it is important to acknowledge that this bill addresses this concern. This bill will not harm schools that are unable to meet the requirements of its contents, instead it will help spread resources to the youth across our country. With only 6 percent of students given the opportunity to register to vote at their highschools, it puts many young people at a serious disadvantage during a critical time in their life (The Civics Center). I urge you to pass this bill so that young people across the state are able to have the opportunity to share their voice on critical issues that impact them, through simple voter registration access at their highschool.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Works Cited

Brill, Laura. "Virginia & Maine Young Voter Registration Rates Vary Dramatically." *The Civics Center*, 1 October 2024,

<https://www.thecivicscenter.org/blog/virgina-and-maine-young-voter-registration-rates>.

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The Civics Center. "The Importance of High Schools." *The Civics Center*,

<https://www.thecivicscenter.org/why-high-school>.