

Rick Daavis  
Belfast  
LD 1149

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

My name is Rick Davis. I live in Belfast, Maine, and I am writing to ask you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1149, An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting and send this measure to the ballot where voters can reject it.

I oppose most of this bill's provisions, but I will focus my testimony on the provisions related to absentee voting.

Neva Allen is a dear friend and neighbor of mine. She is compassionate and intelligent. A few years ago, she created a nonprofit organization that helps homeless young people (ages 16 to 21) in Waldo County. Her organization, But Still I Am One, works with area schools to provide support with prepaid credit cards, payment for driving school, and counseling assistance to this

Neva faces her own challenges relating not to homelessness but to voting. Due to a severe neuromuscular condition, she requires the use of a wheelchair to get around, even in her apartment. She has qualified to have a full-time aide to assist her with mobility and certain other activities of daily living. She is a consistent voter actively engaged in civic affairs, but her physical limitations require her to vote by absentee ballot.

If enacted, LD 1449 would create substantial hardships and challenges for Neva. Current Maine law provides that she can automatically receive an absentee ballot for each election; LD 1449 would require her to request a ballot each time. Current Maine law provides that requests for absentee ballots may be made by telephone; LD 1449 would eliminate that option. Current Maine law allows completed absentee ballots to be returned by a trusted person (like Neva's aide, for example) other than the voter or an immediate family member; LD 1449 would eliminate that option. Under current Maine law, only the municipal clerk or designee may open ballot drop boxes; LD 1449 removes that authority and reassigns it to "a bipartisan team of election officials." If such a team were unavailable for any reason, the option to use a ballot drop box would be removed. Current Maine law allows municipalities to request permission from the Secretary of State for an additional drop box or boxes; LD 1449 restricts the use of ballot drop boxes to one per municipality. That unduly restricts local control and could be a serious hardship for disabled persons living in our larger cities.

For these and many other provisions, I oppose LD 1449 and urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on this measure. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this request.

(I have Neva Allen's permission to use her name and her organization's name.)

Rick Davis  
5 Park Street  
Belfast, ME 04915  
rdphase4@gmail.com