

April 29, 2025

RE: LD1149 – An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Douglass Moore, and I live in Sabattus. I am testifying in opposition to LD1149.

This bill is sold as a way to "protect election integrity." But let's be honest: LD1149 doesn't protect democracy — it undermines it.

It's based on a myth. Voter fraud in the United States is exceedingly rare. In fact, according to data compiled over the past 20 years, out of more than **1 billion ballots cast**, there have been **fewer than 1,500 documented cases of voter fraud**. That's a fraud rate of **0.0001%** — an infinitesimal number that's been twisted into a political weapon.

Now compare that to what we lose by passing laws like this one.

Let me tell you a real story — a painful one.

In Wisconsin, a man named **Richard Smith**, a **72-year-old Black Army veteran**, showed up to vote in 2016. He had served two tours in Vietnam. He had voted in every election since 1968. But under Wisconsin's new voter ID law — passed under the same kind of rhetoric we're hearing today — he was turned away.

Why? Because his veteran's ID didn't meet the new requirements.

He had fought for this country. He had paid taxes, raised children, and helped build his community. But on Election Day, the country he defended told him he didn't count.

That's the real-world impact of bills like LD1149. They don't stop fraud — they stop *Americans*.

So, the question before us today isn't just about policy. It's about values.

**Is it worth stripping a 72-year-old veteran of his right to vote — just to prevent a theoretical fraud that almost never happens?**

Because here's the tradeoff LD1149 asks us to make:

To stop *maybe* one fraudulent ballot, we throw away **thousands** of legitimate ones. We confuse voters, deter new ones, and risk purging people — often disproportionately low-income, elderly, people of color, and yes, veterans — from the democratic process.

And we already know how this story goes. States that passed laws like this one ended up with *tens of thousands* of eligible voters turned away or purged due to clerical errors, database mismatches, or overly strict ID requirements.

Maine has never had a widespread problem with voter fraud. What we do have is a proud tradition of civic engagement — some of the highest turnout in the country. We should be protecting that legacy, not destroying it in the name of a myth.

Let's be clear: LD1149 doesn't fix a real problem. It creates a new one.

It tells people like Mr. Smith — and many of our neighbors — that their service, their lives, and their voices don't matter.

And let's call it what it is: this is a modern-day **poll tax**. When you force voters to jump through hoops, buy documents, travel long distances, or navigate red tape just to prove their eligibility, you're not protecting democracy — you're putting a price on it. That's not just immoral — **it's unconstitutional**.

We are better than that.

I urge you: Vote no on LD1149. Don't let fear and fiction dictate the rules of our democracy.