

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

DATE: 5/2/2025

RE: LD 1149 – 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 Henry Saniuk, and I live in South Portland. Additionally, I serve as the Ward Clerk and election worker for District 5 in South Portland and am testifying in **opposition to LD 1149**.

While I do not support voter ID laws in general, my primary concern with this proposal is not the ID requirement itself, but instead the sweeping and deeply harmful changes to absentee voting that are embedded in this bill. I believe these provisions have the most immediate and tangible impact on the voters I interact with every election.

My district includes many older residents and people working shift-based jobs who cannot easily vote during traditional polling hours. Absentee voting, especially through drop boxes, is a lifeline for these voters. I've already had conversations with the City Clerk this year about installing an additional drop box in South Portland to expand access to voters in my district. **This bill would eliminate that option entirely**, making it even harder for people to vote safely and conveniently. It's a step backward for accessibility and equity.

This bill would also end the option for voters to be automatically mailed an absentee ballot for each election. While this policy has only been in place for a short time, I've already seen the real impact it can have on the community. At the last election, I spoke with a woman whose elderly mother had missed the deadline to request her absentee ballot and was unable to vote. She was delighted when I told her about the new, ongoing absentee ballot list. She said it would lift a huge burden and help ensure her mother could continue to vote in every election. Taking that option away now, just as people are beginning to benefit from it, feels not only shortsighted but also deeply unfair.

Overall, the changes to absentee voting in this bill are not minor adjustments; they are structural barriers that will lead to fewer votes counted. That's not just my opinion; it's what I've experienced from voters firsthand every election.

Maine has long been a national leader in voter turnout because we make voting accessible. This bill undermines that legacy. I urge the committee to oppose this bill and protect the tools that make our democracy work for everyone, not just those who can navigate added bureaucracy.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Henry Saniuk
South Portland