

Jacklyn Stanley
North Yarmouth
LD 1149

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

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Jacklyn Stanley and I live in North Yarmouth, Maine. I'm writing to share my opposition to LD1149.

My opposition to this bill mirrors my opposition to similar bills being heard:

The bill says the state will offer a free voter ID card, but it doesn't explain how people are supposed to get one, how the state will make sure everyone knows about it, or whether the process will be easy and accessible. It leaves all of that up to future rulemaking. Without clear plans and funding in place, there's no guarantee that the ID will actually be free in practice or easy for people to get.

On top of that, there's no long on-ramp or outreach strategy included. An implementation date of January 1, 2026 is short-sighted. That means voters who don't already have the right ID might show up at the polls and find out they can't vote. That's not fair, especially to people in rural areas, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents who may not have a driver's license or passport.

Why does this bill allow voters to sign an affidavit if their lack of photo ID is due to religious objection, but does not allow voters to sign an affidavit if their lack of ID is due to recent natural disaster, lack of transport, poverty, or other circumstances? This singular exception penalizes our citizens who are most at risk of being disenfranchised -- the poor, the disabled, the elderly. If threat of criminal charges is enough to prove authenticity for religious objections, that same threat should be enough for other extenuating circumstances.

Removing the ability of municipalities to have multiple drop boxes, and requiring the drop box to be in a specific location, is also unnecessarily restrictive. If the concern is ballot security, the legislature should specify how a drop-box is maintained and accessed. Portland and Passadumkeag have very different populations and growth potential. If a municipality finds that they need a second drop-box to accommodate ballots, that should be up to the municipality to decide as long as all due security measures are taken.

This bill simultaneously removes the ability for voters to request an absentee ballot over the phone and removes the ability of voters to request ongoing absentee ballots. Many of our elderly do not have ready access to the internet, and this removal of phone services for absentee ballots creates an unnecessary barrier to voting.

Banning municipalities from prepaying return postage does nothing for election security, so I'm not sure why that section is included at all. If a municipality wants to spend the money on stamps, that is their decision. Whether a return envelope is stamped in advance or not has no impact on the integrity of the ballot inside.

Maine has a good track record when it comes to elections. There's no widespread problem with people pretending to be someone else at the polls, or pretending to be someone else through absentee. This bill doesn't solve a real problem, but it creates new ones that could keep eligible voters from casting their ballot. Specifically, LD1149 does nothing to support the voters it would impact most. Any bill that introduces new requirements to voting in the name of security must also shoulder the responsibility of mitigating the barriers it creates. By offering no outreach, no description of how the state will ensure access, and no timeline to ensure awareness, LD1149 does not meet that standard.

Let's keep voting accessible for all Mainers.

Thank you for your time,

Jacklyn Stanley
North Yarmouth