

May 2, 2025

Sen. Craig Hickman, Chair
Rep. Laura Supica, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
Maine State Legislature
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 1149 An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting

Chair Hickman, Chair Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs: My name is David O'Brien, and I am Policy Director for RepresentUs, a nonpartisan election reform advocacy organization. RepresentUs is submitting testimony today in strong opposition to LD 1149.

RepresentUs is dedicated to the idea that the government should be representative of and accountable to the people. It advocates for policies to strengthen our democracy and provides activists with resources and training to bring meaningful change.

Maine rightfully prides itself as a national leader in voter turnout and well-run elections, but LD 1149 would be a step back from that position. It would place unnecessary burdens on Maine voters for no clear benefit. There is no problem in Maine that LD 1149 would fix. The idea that Maine elections are insecure and require extreme measures like those in LD 1149 is simply false. Voter fraud is vanishingly rare in American elections. Repeated investigations and studies confirm this.¹ The conservative think tank Heritage Foundation reports only two cases of voter fraud in Maine since 1982.²

Absentee voting in Maine is popular and secure. Last year saw the second-highest number of absentee ballots cast in Maine in the past five presidential elections.³ Absentee voting makes it easier for many people to exercise their right to vote. Some of the ways LD 1149 would make it more difficult for Maine voters to exercise this right include:

¹ The Brennan Center. *Debunking the Voter Fraud Myth*.
https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Briefing_Memo_Debunking_Voter_Fraud_Myth.pdf.

² The Heritage Foundation. *The Heritage Foundation's election fraud map | Maine*.
<https://electionfraud.heritage.org/search?state=me>.

³ Russ Reed, WMTW, "Maine's absentee voting levels for 2024 election second highest since 2008." (Nov. 5, 2024). <https://www.wmtw.com/article/maine-early-voting-absente-data-2024-election/62802914>.

- Eliminating voters' ability to request absentee ballots over the phone, which would unduly burden voters in rural areas, as well as older voters and voters with disabilities.
- Ending the state's permanent absentee list, forcing voters to fill out—and clerks to process—a new application for every election, generating unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy.
- Arbitrarily limiting municipalities to a single drop box, without regard for any city or town's size, geography, or unique local needs.

Maine currently enjoys both secure elections and high levels of voter participation. LD 1149 would do nothing to improve the former and can only harm the latter. As misinformation about elections continues to polarize the nation and undermine its vital institutions, we urge you to follow evidence and experience, and continue Maine's tradition of expanding and strengthening the franchise.

LD 1149 would burden voters and administrators for no benefit. Too many states are backsliding on democracy. Maine should not join them. We respectfully request that you vote ought not to pass and allow this bill to be rejected by Maine voters in November.

Sincerely,

David O'Brien
Policy Director