



National Nurses
Organizing
Committee



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Nurses
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REMARKS OF MSNA PRESIDENT COKIE GILES

LD 1149: JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

MAY 2, 2025

Hello Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. My name is Cokie Giles. I am the President of the Maine State Nurses Association, which represents 4,000 nurses and caregivers from Portland to Fort Kent.

Unions are the embodiment of democracy at work. We force our employers to deal with us as equals in decision-making about our wages, our benefits and our working conditions. And so union members are kind of fanatics about democracy, both inside and outside of our workplaces.

We don't like it when people try to limit democracy, whether it's the democracy in our workplaces or the democracy in our society. And anyone who knows anything about this bill knows that the result of it becoming law would be exactly that: to limit democracy.

How does it do that? Well, LD 1149 would put severe limits on early voting, voting by mail and on voting by drop box.

Is that because early voting, voting by mail and voting by drop box are significant sources of voter fraud? No, they are not.

Are early voting, voting by mail and voting by drop box somehow making our elections less stable, less trustworthy or somehow less democratic? No, they are not.

Then why on earth would we want to decrease access to voting and literally make it more difficult to vote in the state of Maine? It seems that some people want to fix something that isn't broken for reasons that aren't clear to the rest of us. But one thing that is clear: if LD 1149 were to become law, it would make it more difficult for working people, particularly nurses and healthcare workers to vote. And here's why:

A lot of us work twelve-hour shifts. So, if this bill becomes law and if a nurse is working on election day, there is a really good chance she might not get to vote in that election. For this exact reason, nurses love to vote by mail. They love to vote early. And they love to use drop boxes. Nurses, especially union nurses, love to have their voices heard, and Maine's current voting laws make sure that any nurse, healthcare worker, or anyone else who works for a living, can cast their vote safely and securely, by mail, by voting early or by using a drop box.

Now, I can't speak to the intentions of whoever wrote this bill, but if I wanted to limit democracy and make it as hard as possible for nurses or other working folks to vote, this is the bill I would write. I would severely limit all the ways that working people use their voice in elections, exactly how LD 1149 does.

So while some clever person named this bill: "An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting," I think we should just call it what it really is: "An Act to Limit Democracy so that Nurses and Other Workers have a Harder Time Voting." At least then, it would be clear to everyone what the result of this bill would be if it passes.

So, on behalf of the Maine State Nurses Association, I urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1149.

Thank you.

Coralie "Cokie" Giles
Maine State Nurses Association
LD 1149

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