



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee Veterans and Legal Affairs**

In Opposition to LD 38/1149/397

Submitted May 2, 2025

Thank you Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. The MCOA is a unifying force across sectors that is creating a new narrative about aging and older people in Maine with the goal of building local, statewide, and national support for the systemic changes needed to support our new longevity.

I am testifying in Opposition to LD 38/397/1149 which all require Photographic Identification for Voting.

Nearly 300,000 Mainers are over 65 years old. A majority of them live in rural areas, often in the towns and villages where they raised families or even grew up. Older Mainers value their communities and the relationships that they have developed. In a state that has very little public transportation about 70,000 of those older Mainers do not drive and depend on friends and family to get to appointments and needed services. Despite significant obstacles older Mainers vote in person and by absentee ballots!

According to Americas Health Rankings Voter Participation data Maine Ranks 9th in the country for voter participation of those over 65 with 77.3% voting in the 2020 Presidential Election.

They go on to explain why this data matters:

Voting is a form of active civic participation, which is associated with better health. Research suggests that active social engagement can improve mental and physical health by providing a greater sense of belonging, purpose and support. The act of voting allows individuals a voice in the political process at the local, state and national levels. Their elected political representatives will make choices that impact many aspects of daily life, including individual wealth, rights, education, social services programs and health care access and quality.

MCOA opposes these pieces of legislation because each of them will limit the ability of older Maine residents to vote and fully participate in their government.

All of these ID requirements will impact older women more than older men. Older women who changed their name may have to have proof of their name change. We are already hearing from older women that applying for Real ID can require two or three trips to the DMV in order to have all the required documents. Those people relying on others for transportation might not have the luxury of transportation to secure a marriage certificate, a divorce decree, etc.

LD 38 An Act Requiring Photographic Identification for Voting

LD 38 requires a photo ID in order to vote in person. Again, 70,000 people over 65 in Maine do not have a driver's license. As independent Mainers, they hate to impose on others for a transportation and often limit those requests to medical appointment or voting. Requiring them to get even a no cost State ID card necessitates getting an appointment and find transportation to the DMV office in order to apply in person for the card. For those suffering from chronic or acute illness or disability this may be impossible and would eliminate their opportunity to vote.

LD 397 An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification

LD 397 requires both in person and absentee voting to require a photo id. For absentee balloting rules would need to be adopted but if copies of the photo ID are required it means multiple copies of those documents and having them available for the absentee ballot. Getting documents copied in some parts of rural Maine is neither easy nor inexpensive, further infringing on a voter's right to vote.

LD 397 removes certain official documents that can be used to verify the identity of a person registering to vote. Current law allows a registrar to use a variety of documents to confirm residency including documents confirming eligibility determinations for public benefits, a utility bill, a bank statement, a government check, a paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. By limiting the documents, an older person, who no longer drives and who may be moving in with family would not be able to use official government documents to register to vote.

LD 1149 An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification

LD 1149 seeks to limit the ability of older Mainers to access voting by requiring voters to present a photo ID as the previous bills do but it goes further.

LD 1149 removes provisions of law that allow voters to make telephone applications for absentee ballots. An older person in a rural Maine town will no longer be able to call the Town Office and request an absentee ballot. That person would then need to either get a ride to town or request the ballot in writing or by email.

LD 1149 would eliminate the provision that allow voters to automatically receive absentee ballots for each election without submitting a separate request for each election. Current law allows a voter 65 or older or a person living with a disability to apply for status as an ongoing absentee voter. This bill would remove that provision and require the voter to write or email the town office every municipal, primary, state and federal election to receive a ballot. The voter would need to provide the same information each time with complete copies of photo ID and statements.

LD 1149 would require that a municipality may have only one secured drop box and only one office in the municipality for the return of absentee ballots. One drop box or office in urban areas would only serve to disenfranchise people with limited or no transportation. Prohibiting communities from making decisions about how best to serve their residents is state overreach.

LD 1149 allows ballots to be challenged if the signature on the ballot does not correspond to the signature on the registration card. A person who registered to vote at 18 or 21 and has suffered a vision or muscle disease may not have a signature that matches the one from decades earlier.

LD 1149 creates a cumbersome process to submit an absentee ballot. If the process is not followed to the letter the ballot can be rejected or challenged.

These ballot access restrictions are designed to reduce access to voting, they create barriers that for some are insurmountable. They impact older rural voters significantly, removing their ability to fully participate in the life of their community, state and country.

I urge your opposition to LDs **38/397/1149** and let older Mainers vote.