

## Testimony in OPPOSITION to LD 1149

TO: The Honorable Craig Hickman, The Honorable Laura Supica, Co-Chairs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

FROM: Christine Hart, South Portland

DATE: April 28, 2025

RE: LD 1149 — RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Require Voter Approval of Certain Laws Enacted by the Legislature

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is Christine Hart, and I live in South Portland. I'm here to ask you to vote *ought not to pass* on LD 1149 — because I believe in a Maine where voting is accessible, safe, and respected, not restricted by fear or partisan maneuvering.

Let's not mince words: this bill is a direct attack on the right to vote. It is part of a troubling national trend to make voting harder, especially for those who already face barriers — seniors, people with disabilities, low-income workers, and rural Mainers. It may not carry the loud rhetoric of voter fraud, but make no mistake: LD 1149 is voter suppression cloaked in bureaucracy.

I'm proud to live in Maine, a state where the voting process is simple, trusted, and secure. Absentee voting is not just convenient — it's essential. I've used it when serving our country abroad as a Peace Corps volunteer. I've picked up and dropped off ballots for my spouse and vice versa. These are not abuses of the system — they *are* the system working for real people.

What makes LD 1149 even more troubling is that it's rooted in a false narrative — the idea that voter fraud is a serious problem in Maine. It simply isn't. Maine has among the highest voter turnout rates in the country, and no history of widespread voter fraud. In fact, the Maine Secretary of State's office has confirmed that the state's elections are secure, well-run, and trustworthy. Nationally, numerous investigations — including by federal courts and bipartisan election officials — have found voter fraud to be vanishingly rare. This bill doesn't respond to a real problem; it manufactures one. And in doing so, it threatens to disenfranchise the very people our democracy should protect.

LD 1149 sends a dangerous message: that we don't trust voters, we don't trust town clerks, and we're willing to sacrifice convenience, dignity, and participation in the name of imagined threats. That's not the Maine I believe in.

The right to vote should never be a partisan issue. It should be sacred. We should be building a democracy that welcomes everyone in — not one that turns people away with paperwork, delays, and red tape. And we certainly shouldn't let fear decide who gets to participate in our democracy.

I urge you to reject LD 1149 and protect what makes Maine elections work: trust, access, and the belief that every voter counts — and every vote should be counted.

Thank you for your time, service, and your commitment to protecting democracy.