

Genevieve Lysen
Maine People's Alliance
LD 1149

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee my name is Genevieve Lysen, I'm the Organizing Director at the Maine People's Alliance and I am from Lewiston. I am here to ask you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1149 and send this measure to the ballot where voters can reject it.

Maine is considered a leader nationally in strengthening and protecting our democracy – from publicly-financed Clean Elections to ranked-choice voting, Mainers have been at the forefront of demanding and expanding their democratic rights. MPA has a long track record of working to protect and bolster Mainers' voting rights, including in 2011, when MPA led an effort to safeguard those rights through a successful People's Veto referendum campaign to protect same-day voter registration and a new law to ensure automatic enrollment of new voters.

Through hundreds of thousands of conversations over more than 40 years with Maine voters – we know firsthand that there are already barriers to participation in our democracy and we should be making it easier, not harder to vote.

I personally have used a ballot drop box, as I worked all the hours the polls are open on election day. For a number of election cycles I was so busy in the lead up that I forgot to request an absentee ballot and was so grateful to be able to go in person to City Hall, often the last day that was possible!

I've helped my elderly Grammy, Theresa request a ballot over the phone. Other years, I requested her ballot in person and brought it to her and delivered it back to the Clerk.

LD 1149 is an attempt at dangerous voter suppression that seeks to prevent Mainers - those too-often underrepresented in civic life, from having their voices heard and their votes counted. I hope that people like my Grammy can continue to cast their ballots, and people like me – juggling work and family commitments on election day, can also continue to have our voices heard.

I urge the committee to vote ought not to pass on LD 1149, and in doing so protecting access to our democracy.

Thank you.

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