

## LD 34 (2023) Voter ID Bill Testimony

Good morning, I am Alex AuCoin. I am speaking to you today regarding LD 34, a bill to require voter identification. While I have many concerns about this bill and its potential impediment to voter access, I am speaking to you today specifically as an advocate for members of the LGBTQ community. I am the President of the Hallowell Pride Alliance, the past President of the Bridge Alliance in Bangor and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist working in Maine since 2003. Much of my professional career has been working with LGBTQ Individuals, couples and families, with a specialty in supporting Transgender and Gender non-conforming youth and adults. I am also a part of the LGBTQ Community.

Many members of my community, myself included, have histories which include trauma, harassment and discrimination. For some of us, these histories are triggered by the need to show photo identification which may not align with our gender expression and presentation. This may occur while someone is in the process of gender transition or due to challenges with updating identification for a variety of reasons. Our Transgender citizens, in particular, have founded fear that outing themselves to their community may result in similar threats again. This reality was part of the impetus behind the passage of LD 1900 in 2022. This previous law removed the requirement of public notice of name changes. Requiring photo identification as a requirement to voting may cause similar threats to the safety, housing, and employment of Transgender Mainers by outing them to community members.

Given the potential harm related to being outed in one's community, the passage of this bill could discourage members of the Transgender and Non-Binary Community from engaging in the voting process. Throughout the past few years, we have seen an onslaught of bills aimed at attacking the rights and freedoms of transgender youth and adults. As these rights remain a central focus of legislators within our state and across our nation, it is critical that these individuals feel empowered to use their voices and their votes to advance their freedoms. As a community that has had to fight vigilantly for their rights, barriers to voting access is yet another way of limiting their freedoms.

Please, reject this bill in order to maintain voter access for members of our Transgender community and all Mainers.