



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT  
OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE

SHENNA BELLOWS  
SECRETARY OF STATE

**TESTIMONY OF  
SHENNA BELLOWS, SECRETARY OF STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
Veterans and Legal Affairs

March 1, 2023

L.D. 258, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

Senators Rotundo and Hickman, Representatives Sachs and Supica, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Shenna Bellows and I am the Secretary of State. I am here today to present testimony in support of those items presented in the 2024-2025 Biennial Budget for the Department of the Secretary of State.

Department information begins on page **A-628** of the **Budget Document**.

**Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations 0692**

There are 8 General Fund initiatives and 1 Other Special Revenue initiative:

1. Initiative: Provides funding for the increase in the annual membership dues for the Electronic Registration Information Center program. The All Other request is **\$8,200 in FY2023-24 and \$13,030 in FY2024-25**.

The 130th Legislature directed the Secretary of State to join the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) program and provided funding to pay the annual maintenance fee for fiscal year 2021-22 and fiscal year 2022-23. The ERIC Board voted in 2022 to raise the annual fee for fiscal year 2022-23 based on increased costs to ERIC. This increase is included in a Supplemental Budget request for fiscal year 2022-23 and provides for a proportional increase for fiscal year 2023-24 and fiscal year 2024-25.

2. Initiative: Provides funding for the March 2024 Presidential Primary, which only occurs every four years and is not included in the baseline budget. The All Other request is **\$178,600 in FY2023-24**.

The Legislature enacted a new Presidential Primary law prior to the 2020 election year. This request is based on the costs incurred for the March 2020 Presidential Primary.

3. Initiative: Provides funding for the increase in election ballot printing, postage and other election costs. The All Other request is **\$202,735 in FY2023-24 and \$113,000 in FY2024-25.**

Supply chain and staffing issues have increased the cost of materials and delivery, which in turn has increased the cost of statewide elections dramatically over the past two years - by about 25%. This request reflects a 25% increase for each election held during the budget period, (fiscal year 2022-23: 11/2022 Gubernatorial General Election \$104,440; fiscal year 2023-24: 11/2023 Referendum Election \$71,835; 3/2024 Presidential Primary \$44,650; 6/2024 State Primary \$86,250) (fiscal year 2024-25: 11/2024 Presidential General Election \$113,000). A Supplemental Budget request is in fiscal year 2022-23.

4. Initiative: Provides one-time funding for the additional ballots to be printed to implement the Semi-Open Primary law in 2024. The All Other request is **\$240,840 in FY 2023-24.**

The 130th Legislature enacted Public Law 2021, chapter 750, "An Act To Establish Semi-open Primaries", which takes effect on January 1, 2024. It is estimated that additional ballots will need to be printed for the two major parties equal to 33% of the number of unenrolled voters who will be able to vote in a party primary without first having to enroll in the party. It is estimated the number of ballots needed will increase 15% over the number of party voters in March and June 2020 in anticipation of increased voting by party members.

There is one Other Special Revenue initiative:

5. Initiative: Provides funding for in-state and out-of-state travel to conferences for updates on corporations and uniform commercial code programs. The All Other request is **\$5,153 in FY2023-24 and \$5,153 in FY2024-25.**

Provides funding for in-state and out-of-state travel to conferences for updates on corporations and uniform commercial code program areas, dues and other related program costs.

6. Initiative: Establishes one Information System Support Specialist position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$89,840 in FY2023-24 and \$95,110 in FY2024-25.** The All Other request is **\$11,207 in FY2023-24 and \$2,796 in FY2024-25.**

This request establishes one Information System Support Specialist I position for account creation, maintenance, phone support, email requests, and remote assistance to help with user personal computer issues and provides associated All Other funding. As part of the modernization projects, Secretary of State is strengthening the authentication methods to log into applications and centralizing control to add, update, disable, or delete user accounts. This will require more helpdesk assistance for application users by working toward extending access to applications for more authorized users.

7. Initiative: Establishes one Public Service Manager III position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$152,355 in FY2023-24 and \$160,553 in FY2024-25**. The All Other request is **\$11,207 in FY2023-24 and \$2,796 in FY2024-25**.

This position will be a Director of Election Administration, Audits and Administrative Services reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary for Corporations, Elections and Commissions and charged with overseeing the Division of Election Administration and the Division of Election Audits & Training as well as supervising staff responsible for administration of the Administrative Procedure Act. Elections are more complex and challenging to administer as Maine experiences increased turnover among municipal election clerks, new legal requirements like online voter registration and post-election audits and emerging election security threats. This position is necessary to support the Deputy Secretary in overseeing the efficient and secure day to day operations of every aspect of work conducted by the Division of Election Administration and the Division of Election Audits and Training.

8. Initiative: Establishes one Public Service Manager I position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$131,538 in FY2023-24 and \$138,481 in FY2024-25**. The All Other request is **\$11,207 in FY2023-24 and \$2,796 in FY2024-25**.

This position will be an Assistant Director of Voter Registration to oversee every aspect of voter registration including monitoring municipal and other voter registration operations, supporting municipal clerks on voter registration questions and use of the central voter registration system. In addition, provide regular updates and management of the central voter registration system, voter list maintenance operations and data exchange with other states to ensure election security. This position is necessary to ensure accurate voter lists and support municipalities in every aspect of voter registration to continue to maintain public confidence in Maine's election integrity.

9. Initiative: Establishes one Public Service Coordinator I position and provides funding for related All Other costs. The Personal Services request is **\$104,191 in FY2023-24 and \$109,844 in FY2024-25**. The All Other request is **\$11,207 in FY2023-24 and \$2,796 in FY2024-25**.

This Public Service Coordinator I position, (Ballot and Voting Systems Manager), would require specialized knowledge of ballot design and layout as well as ballot tabulation and accessible voting systems operation. The position would oversee ballot design and layout (including accessible absentee ballots) for all state races including general, primary, referendum and special elections. The position would also oversee the testing and coordinate maintenance of all voting-related equipment including tabulators and accessible voting machines and work with municipalities on equipment security and proper storage and maintenance. This position would coordinate procurement of new voting systems, and would also coordinate the procurement, installation and security of absentee ballot drop boxes.

There is one language item in Part PPP on page 52.

Sec. PPP-1. Rename Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations program within the Department of Secretary of State is renamed the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions program.

Sec. PPP-2. Rename Elections and Commissions. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Elections and Commissions program within the Department of Secretary of State is renamed the Federal Elections Grant program.

Sec. PPP-3. Maine Revised Statutes amended; revision clause. Wherever in the Maine Revised Statutes the program name “Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations” appears, it is amended to read “Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions” and the Revisor of Statutes shall implement this revision when updating, publishing or republishing the statutes.

Sec. PPP-4. Maine Revised Statutes amended; revision clause. Wherever in the Maine Revised Statutes the program name “Elections and Commissions” appears, it is amended to read “Federal Elections Grant” and the Revisor of Statutes shall implement this revision when updating, publishing or republishing the statutes.

## **PART PPP SUMMARY**

This Part renames two programs within the Department of the Secretary of State to reflect the functions performed. The Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations program is renamed to the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions program. The Elections and Commissions program is renamed to the Federal Elections Grant program. Sections 3 and 4 direct the Revisor of Statutes to update these program names when updating, publishing or republishing the statutes.

This concludes my testimony on the items included in the Governor's proposed 2024-2025 Biennial budget.

I would be happy to answer your questions now or at the work session.

Thank you.