

LD 1022 An Act to Allow School Budget Referenda on the Same Day as Primary Elections

Matthew Garside, Poland Town Manager

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Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Matthew Garside, Poland Town Manager, an RSU community. I am here to testify in support of LD 1022 "An Act to Allow School Budget Referenda on the Same Day as Primary Elections"

- Aligning the timeline with the existing June election prevents two elections from being run simultaneously.
- This variance in timeline precipitates a time-consuming duplication of work and effort on a per voter basis, specifically related to the absentee ballot process. For each voter, you have to process two absentee ballot applications and enter voter's ballots in the State's CVR software program four times per voter.
- The required absentee ballot audits, tracking and envelope filing have to be separate, unlike the consolidation Clerks are afforded with all other combined elections.
- Fiscally, not only the duplicate time spent is wasteful, we are required to mail ballots separately on separate dates – incurring postage, materials increase, and handling costs – doubled.
- Many small communities, including Poland, have one set of election workers. These folks have a limited appetite to work multiple elections during the year. While some are retired, others work and must use vacation time to work an election. Recruiting and training new election workers is becoming problematic.
- The municipality bears the financial and organizational cost of the election. It is unfair for an RSU to be able to force a municipality to expend funds without reimbursement.
- Voters don't understand the timing of and why they can't get both ballots at one time, they don't understand why School Budget Elections involve two separate dates for voting, and why they can only vote a School Budget up or down on the end ballot.
- When voters are confused, intimidated by, or lack confidence in the "system", they often will opt not to participate.
- Holding the RSU budget election concurrently with the June election will provide for a larger voter turnout than would be otherwise seen in a stand alone election.