



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
and State and Local Government

January 21, 2025

LD 209, An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Senators Rotundo and Baldacci, Representatives Gattine and Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and State and Local Government, 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 Supplemental Budget for the Department of the Secretary of State.

Department information begins on page **A-44** of the **Budget Document**.

Administration - Archives 0050

There are 2 General Fund initiatives:

1. Provides one time funding for the storage, organization, classification and management of responses to public inquiries for records pertaining to the Independent Commission to Investigate the Facts of the Tragedy in Lewiston. The All Other request is **\$113,214 in FY2024-25**.

The Maine State Archives is the keeper of the official records of the Independent Commission to Investigate the Facts of the Tragedy in Lewiston. As such, there is a need to organize, catalog, provide for secure preservation, and respond to information requests appropriately. This initiative seeks to provide funding for one contracted attorney and one archival specialist to curate the collection to make this important work possible in a timely manner.

2. Provides funding for increases in technology costs in accordance with MaineIT increases. The All Other request is **\$1,545 in FY2024-25**.

Expenses from MaineIT have increased. This initiative seeks to provide funding for the increase.

We also have initiatives pertaining to the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions and are referred to under the prior designation of the bureau, which was formerly known as the Bureau of Administrative Services and Corporations, a term that dates back to the early 1990s. The Bureau is comprised of three divisions. The Division of Elections and the Administrative Procedures Act is our state's guardian of democracy, overseeing all state and federal elections for the State of Maine. The Division of Election Audits and Training is responsible for safeguarding voter confidence in our elections through election auditing and training. The Division of Corporations, UCC and Commissions serves as a repository for all records relating to business and nonprofit corporate entities as well as all liens filed on personal property under the Uniform Commercial Code and oversees notaries public, boards and commissions for the State of Maine.

Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions – 0692

There are 2 General Fund Initiatives under the jurisdiction of the State and Local Government Committee:

1. Provides funding for increases in technology costs in accordance with MaineIT increases. The All Other request is **\$19,838 in FY2024-25.**

Expenses from MaineIT have increased. This initiative seeks to provide funding for the increase.

2. Provides funding for the approved reclassification of one Accounting Associate I position to an Office Specialist I position retroactive to August 2023. The Personal Services request is **\$14,978 in FY 2024-25.**

This employee-initiated reorganization of one Accounting Associate I position to an Office Specialist I position was approved by the Bureau of Human Resources in August of 2023. The Office of Employee Relations did an audit of the position based on this request, and they determined that the position class needed to be raised to the Office Specialist I level and that the employee is eligible for back pay to 2023. If the funding is not provided now, the liability will continue to grow until the position is funded to the appropriate level. This position provides support for daily deposits of corporate filing fees, and other support for the Bureau of Corporations Elections and Commissions' accounting processes.

3. Provides funding for the increase in election ballot printing, postage and other election costs. The All Other request is **\$408,431 in FY2024-25.**

This amount represents the unbudgeted expenses associated with performing the legally required functions of administering the 2024 election. Specifically, because there were five referendum questions, we were required to print a second ballot, but the fiscal note process did not provide the Elections Division with funding for that second ballot. Moreover, continued consolidation in the printing industry and supply chain issues continue to drive substantial increases in costs for printing and delivery of ballots and absentee envelopes and other election supplies.

This concludes my testimony on the items included in the Governor's proposed Supplemental FY 2024-25 budget.

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