Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

LD 158 - *An Act to Direct the Secretary of State to Establish a Date Each Year for Voting by Absentee Ballot*

February 3, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 158 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC guides the MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

Municipal officials appreciate the effort to maintain consistency throughout the election process but feel that this change adds an unnecessary restriction and is similar to a solution in search of a problem. With one printer available to print the hundreds of thousands of ballots needed for Maine elections, the delivery of the materials could differ between communities. Current law allows for the distribution of absentee ballots as soon as they are delivered to the municipality, which lends flexibility to the absentee voting process.

Additionally, the Maine Town & City Clerks Association has shared their opposition to the proposal with the LPC, who pointed to an event during the 2024 election where one municipality received absentee ballots before another community, which sparked debate on whether the first municipality was holding the ballots unlawfully.

Maine election officials take pride in the conduct of safe and secure elections by explicitly following the laws relating to the election and absentee voting procedures. Misunderstandings can and will occur, but local leaders are against putting into statute something that could be better handled with communication. For this reason, the LPC urges the committee to oppose LD 158.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.