



**LD 175, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to
Ensure That Only Citizens of the United States May Participate in Elections**

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Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

I am pleased to introduce LD 175, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Ensure That Only Citizens of the United States May Participate in Elections."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of a proposed constitutional amendment ensuring that only U.S. citizens have the right to vote in Maine elections. This amendment is critical for upholding the integrity of our electoral process and reaffirming a fundamental principle of American democracy: that voting is a right and privilege reserved exclusively for citizens. Moreover, this is a common-sense measure with overwhelming public support, and the people of Maine deserve the opportunity to have their voices heard by deciding this issue at the ballot box.

The Importance of Citizen-Only Voting

The right to vote is one of the most sacred and defining features of citizenship in the United States. It is a privilege earned through birthright or naturalization and carries the weight of civic responsibility, ensuring that those who cast ballots have a vested interest in the long-term future of our state and country. By explicitly affirming that

only U.S. citizens may vote in Maine elections, this amendment will protect and reinforce the integrity of our democratic system.

Allowing noncitizens to vote devalues the meaning of citizenship itself. The ability to vote is not just another government service—it is a revolutionary principle that has defined what it means to be American. Our nation was founded on the idea that its citizens, and only its citizens, have the right to determine their government and future. Yet today, we see efforts to roll back this principle, weakening the meaning of citizenship and the sovereignty of our nation. We cannot go to France or Ghana or Japan and vote in their elections, nor would we presume to have that right. So why would we willingly give that right away here in the United States?

While Maine law currently requires U.S. citizenship to vote in state and federal elections, there is no constitutional provision explicitly barring noncitizen voting in local elections. Across the country, certain jurisdictions have moved to allow noncitizens to participate in municipal elections, setting a dangerous precedent that threatens to erode public confidence in our electoral system. This amendment will close any potential loophole by codifying citizen-only voting at the constitutional level, preventing future policy changes that could undermine this bedrock principle.

Protecting Electoral Integrity and Public Trust

Ensuring that only citizens vote is essential to maintaining public trust in our elections. When noncitizens—who are not subject to the full legal obligations and responsibilities of citizenship—are permitted to vote, it dilutes the voice of lawful citizens and raises concerns about the integrity of our electoral process. A constitutional amendment will provide clarity and uniformity, guaranteeing that only those who have pledged allegiance to our country and its laws can participate in shaping our government.

Aligning with National and Statewide Standards

A clear, constitutional prohibition on noncitizen voting would align Maine with federal standards, as U.S. law already requires citizenship for voting in federal elections. Many states have taken similar steps to ensure that only citizens can vote in all elections. By passing this amendment, Maine will join the majority of states in explicitly protecting the voting rights of citizens while preventing future legal ambiguities that could lead to noncitizen participation in state and local elections.

Additionally, a constitutional amendment is necessary because the state constitution is the highest legal document in Maine. If we are serious about protecting the integrity of our elections, it must be enshrined in the strongest legal terms possible. Anything less leaves open the possibility of future attempts to weaken these protections.

Addressing Misinformation and Upholding Legal Frameworks

Opponents of this amendment may argue that noncitizen voting is not currently a widespread issue in Maine. However, waiting until a substantial problem arises is not a responsible approach to governance. Proactively amending our state constitution ensures clarity, prevents legal challenges, and reassures voters that Maine is committed to maintaining a transparent and accountable electoral system.

Recent investigative reports have uncovered evidence that votes have been cast under the names of noncitizens in multiple Maine elections since 2016. According to an article published by *The Maine Wire* (October 2024), official records confirm instances where noncitizens have participated in elections, despite existing legal restrictions. This revelation underscores the urgency of enshrining citizen-only voting in the state constitution to prevent future occurrences and reinforce voter confidence in our electoral process.

Maine has a documented history of efforts to weaken election safeguards, further underscoring the need for this amendment. In 2009, legislation was introduced—*An Act To Allow Noncitizen Residents To Vote in Municipal Elections*—which would have permitted municipalities to allow noncitizens to vote in local elections. More recently, in Portland, there has been a push to allow noncitizens, including undocumented residents, to vote in municipal elections.

However, this is not just about Portland—this is about ensuring that the people of Maine as a whole have the opportunity to set state policy, covering Portland and every other town. This constitutional amendment simply gives Mainers the right to decide the future of their elections, rather than leaving it open to local political maneuvering.

Citizen-only voting is widely supported across party lines, and passing this amendment ensures that Mainers can make their voices heard at the ballot box. The right to vote is not a partisan issue—it is a matter of fundamental fairness and sovereignty. Allowing the people of Maine to weigh in on this amendment is the most democratic course of action we can take.

Additionally, by enshrining citizen-only voting in our constitution, we send a clear message that Maine respects the rule of law and the fundamental principles of American democracy. Naturalization is an accessible path for legal residents who wish to vote, and this amendment encourages civic participation through lawful means rather than diluting the significance of citizenship. Any room left open for noncitizen voting is a step toward losing our sovereignty as a state and a nation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, passing this constitutional amendment is a necessary and proactive step to protect the integrity of Maine's elections. Some may ask, "Why is this necessary?" I would ask instead, "Why wouldn't we take every possible step to protect and strengthen Maine's elections?" Ensuring that only citizens can vote upholds the values of our democratic system, aligns with national standards, and reinforces public trust in our electoral process. This is not just about policy; it is about principle. The right to vote is a privilege of citizenship that carries great responsibility, and we must do everything in our power to protect it.

A vote against this amendment is a vote to allow the door to remain open for noncitizens to vote in Maine elections. That is the choice before this committee today. I urge you to support this amendment and move it forward to safeguard the foundational principle that voting is a right reserved for citizens of the United States.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.