



*Department of the Secretary of State*

*Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions*

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Secretary of State

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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State  
Department of the Secretary of State

*February 3, 2025*

Testifying In Opposition to

L.D. 199, "An Act to Change the Limits on Candidates' Communications with Voters at the Poll"

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Shenna Bellows, I reside in Manchester, and I am the Secretary of State and chief elections officer in Maine. I am speaking today in opposition to L.D. 199.

When and how and where voters entering polling places are subject to interactions with candidates is an issue that has been discussed over and over in this committee over the years. Just two years ago, further clarifications to the law were made with an effort to ensure that candidates, or their representatives, are able to communicate with voters without unduly influencing them. Our department stands firm in the belief that when it comes to conduct at the voting place, candidates should be restricted in what they can say to voters entering and exiting the polls. While we certainly understand and support a candidate's right to campaign prior to the election in order to garner votes, this campaign activity should not extend into the voting place. By the time a voter enters the voting place, that voter has already decided for whom they wish to vote. Voters should be able to enter and exit the voting place without being harassed by candidates trying to gather last minute votes.

We adhere to the concept that Election Day is for the voters, not the candidates.

Additionally, municipal clerks should be able to focus on administering the election without being called away to mediate whether or not the way that someone is stating the office that they are running for is an attempt to influence their vote.

For these reasons, we oppose L.D. 199. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.