



*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 10, 2025*

Testifying against

L.D. 349 “An Act to Repeal the Laws That Allow Same-day Voter Registration”

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Shenna Bellows, I live in Manchester, and I am the Secretary of State. I am speaking today against L.D. 349.

Same-day voter registration is the single greatest safety net we have to ensure every eligible voter is able to cast a ballot.

No matter how much of a procrastinator you are, no matter if you just moved to a new town or a new apartment, no matter if you didn't tune into the election until that very day and your registration is out of date, if you are 18 years or older, you are a Maine resident, and you are a U.S. citizen, you can register to vote and cast your ballot on the same day, even Election Day.

In her 1997 testimony on a bill similar to this one, Deputy Secretary of State Julie Flynn said:

Maine enacted election day registration in 1973 through a bipartisan effort; it has now been in effect for almost 25 years. In the 1972 Presidential Election, Maine ranked 21st in voter turnout. Since that time, Maine has consistently ranked in the top ten states for voter turnout. In the Presidential Elections of 1992 and 1996, Maine was first in the nation. This change represents a step backward, and thousands of people would be disenfranchised...

28 years later, Maine continues to lead the nation in voter participation. In the 2022 General Election, Maine voters turned out at a higher rate than voters in any other state. We had a record number of voters participate in the 2024 General Election, and we'll know this spring how we rank among the states.

If a clerk or another resident of a voter's municipality have a specific reason to believe that someone is not an eligible voter, the challenge process exists to ensure that no one who is ineligible to vote

changes the outcome of an election. That was the appropriate procedure back when Deputy Secretary Flynn testified on the 2005 version of this bill, and it is the appropriate remedy now.

This General Election season, 15,399 Maine voters registered or updated their registration record during the absentee voting period, likely on the same day they cast their ballot. And on Election Day itself, 47,072 Mainers registered to vote or updated their registration record. Eliminating same-day voter registration would be a huge step backward for these thousands of Maine voters.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the importance of Maine's same-day voter registration law, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.