



Maine Education Association

Jesse Hargrove *President*
Beth French *Vice President*
Jaye Rich *Treasurer*
Rebecca Cole *NEA Director*
Rachelle Bristol *Executive Director*

March 3, 2025

MEA OPPOSITION TO LD 718

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Committee:

My name is Ben Grant and I am the General Counsel of the Maine Education Association. The MEA is a labor union representing about 24,000 educators and support staff in nearly every public school in the state, in both the University of Maine and Community College systems, and in several Academy schools. In addition, thousands of retired educators continue their connection and advocacy work through the MEA-Retired program. The MEA, and the labor movement as a whole, has a long history of supporting policies that expand the options for Maine people to vote. From preserving same-day registration at the ballot box in 2011 to backing ranked-choice voting and clean elections, the MEA has – and will continue to – stand with the thousands of Maine people who advocate for pro-democracy policies.

For this reason, I am here to register the MEA's opposition to LD 718 – a measure clearly designed to begin backtracking on our successful and expansive rights to cast ballots in different ways here in Maine. Maine has a proud place among the fifty states as generating among the highest levels of voter participation. One reason is our engaged and educated electorate – but surely another reason is the legal framework for our voting processes. There is no justification for beginning to erode those methods.

Specifically, this bill is almost perfectly crafted to make voting harder for many Maine senior citizens, though I am sure the impact will be even broader. Many Maine seniors are unable to make the trip to their voting place, so the option to either vote by mail or have a ballot transported to them by a trusted family member or caretaker makes voting possible. In addition, the ongoing absentee status makes the system automatic, thus removing the additional barrier of needing to remember another bureaucratic box to tick off each year.

This appears to be another voting "reform" in the category of a solution looking for a problem. It should be voted *ought-not-to-pass*.

35 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330
1349 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401
7 Hatch Drive Suite #220, P.O. Box 310, Caribou, ME 04736
29 Christopher Toppi Drive, South Portland, ME 04106

Tel: 207-622-5866 – Fax: 207-888-2070 – www.maineea.org