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THE MAINE SENATE
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***Testimony of Senate Majority Leader Teresa S. Pierce introducing
LD 693, An Act to Support the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Corporations,
Elections and Commissions
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
March 19, 2025***

Chair Baldacci, Chair Salisbury, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Teresa S. Pierce. I serve as the Senate Majority Leader, representing Senate District 25, which includes Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth (majority), Gray, and Long Island. I am pleased to be here today to introduce **LD 693, An Act to Support the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions.**

Last summer, I heard from two constituents, Sean in North Yarmouth and Richard in Falmouth, who shared their experience with the Department of the Secretary of State's Division of Corporations. They both work in the private sector with local and out of state clients and noticed that the Division was "extremely overworked and backlogged." I agree.

If we are to expect our state workforce to operate in an efficient manner, we should ensure they have the resources and staff capacity to do so. The Division of Corporations has not received any new positions from the Legislature in well over a decade. Secretary of State Shenna Bellows has worked to alleviate this backlog by bringing on temporary staff who continue their work today.

LD 693 would fund three Office Specialist II positions within the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions. Office specialists at the Division of Corporations assist and advise many Maine residents daily through a myriad of issues and questions. They often make the difference for being certified and able to apply for business bank accounts, delivering on payroll, taking out new insurance policies and securing transactions with clients across the state and country. Supporting businesses, especially small businesses, that cannot afford the delay in processing time is an issue I believe cuts across party lines.

I have the utmost respect for the workforce at the Department of the Secretary of State. Their efforts truly benefit Mainers in more ways than we can imagine. LD 693 would honor their work and be a tremendous service to Maine's business leaders, allowing them to focus on their companies and continue growing our economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. Secretary Bellows is here to testify as well, I am happy to answer questions but would defer specific or operational questions to the Secretary.