



Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Department of the Secretary of State
Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions

Julie L. Flynn
Deputy Secretary of State

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
And Emily Cook, Deputy Secretary of State
Department of the Secretary of State

April 24, 2025

Testifying in favor of

L.D. 1702 "An Act to Amend Election Polling Place Candidate Restrictions"

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 testifying in favor of L.D. 1702.

Election Day is for voters. That is the ethos this testimony is based on.

Sections 1 and 2 do not change current Department interpretation of who is a candidate, or what activities those candidates may engage in within 250 feet of the entrance to the voting place, as well as within the voting place itself. Committee members may recall that in 2024, then-presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s campaign inquired as to whether or not they could collect signatures to get him on the ballot at the polls on Presidential Primary Day. We instructed the campaign that they could not, a decision that was upheld by the courts. Having a candidate collect signatures for an office that was on the ballot that day would inevitably result in conversations about which of the various candidates would be the best General Election choice, an inappropriate influence on voters at the polls that day.

In Section 7, Subsection A seems to be reiterating the same concepts as Sections 1 and 2. We support Subsection B to keep the immediate vicinity of a voting place free of activities that may give voters pause as to the fairness of elections – the exchanging of money with a candidate may be worrisome to some voters. We would just encourage the Committee to ensure that any candidate fundraising or solicitation is treated equally, whether a candidate is traditionally financed or a Clean Elections candidate. This is important so that Clerks, Wardens and other election officials do not need to spend time on a busy, high-stress day managing which candidates may or may not be conducting certain activities in that 250 foot zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have.

101 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0101
www.Maine.gov/sos/cec; tel. 207-624-7736