



Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

L.D. 1329 “An Act to Identify United States Citizenship Status on Driver's Licenses and Nondriver Identification Cards”

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State and
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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, I am providing testimony respectfully in opposition of L.D. 1329 “An Act to Identify United States Citizenship Status on Driver's Licenses and Nondriver Identification Cards.”

It has long been a widely held belief that a Mainer’s license should indicate who they are, what types of vehicles they are authorized to operate on our roads, and what restrictions are placed on their driving privilege.

The federal government has already started us down the slippery slope of using licenses for other purposes with REAL ID, but Maine should not move itself further down that slope by requiring that citizenship status be included on our driver licenses.

Even beyond these reasons to oppose L.D. 1329, I should note that this bill is additionally unnecessary for the sponsor’s stated intent and would also be close to unworkable to accomplish those goals.

Only U.S. citizens may vote in our elections, but it is not a requirement that voters provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote, which is why the sponsor’s intent to provide voters an identification document that connotes citizenship at the state level unnecessary.

If such a voter registration requirement were to become law, a requirement to include U.S. citizenship status on driver licenses would only be useful to Maine voters if they can access such a credential. Given our current experience with Maine drivers coming in droves to get a REAL ID-compliant credential, we would expect a flood of customers ahead of the subsequent election. Right now, we process about 300,000 license a year and there are approximately 1 million licenses. To handle the surge of customers coming for a credential with their citizenship noted, we would need an additional 350 temporary staff for branch offices (currently there are 100) and 70 temporary support staff in the administrative office (currently 70), as well as two temporary HR generalists to hire all these people. We would also need equipment, software licenses and other tools for these temporary hires to complete their work, as well as additional appropriations for more leased space around the state.

Furthermore, should the committee be interested in pursuing this legislation, we would note that asylum seekers are a subset of non-citizens, and we are not sure why a distinction on what status of non-citizen a Maine resident would be necessary to denote on a driving credential. The committee should be aware that a person's immigration status can and often does change. Adding an additional data point on a license means that there is just one more thing that can be out of date between renewal periods, forcing more customers to come more often to branch offices to update information. We would need additional branch office and administrative office staff to be hired permanently in order to manage the ongoing increased branch activity we would expect.

Finally, given the amount of preparatory work that would be required to implement this bill, the implementation date would need to be pushed back to January 1, 2028.

In conclusion, I urge you to oppose L.D. 1329. Thank you for your time today and I will be happy to answer any questions.