



Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

Testimony in Opposition to:

L.D. 38, *An Act Requiring Photographic Identification for Voting*
L.D. 397, *An Act to Require a Voter to Show Photographic Identification*
L.D. 1149, *An Act to Require an Individual to Present Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting*

May 2, 2025

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and distinguished members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Heide Lester, I live in South Paris, and I am the Deputy Director of EqualityMaine, which has been advocating on behalf of Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984. We oppose photographic identification requirements as they constitute a form of voter suppression and disproportionately impact many communities, including older adults, people with disabilities, those with lower incomes, students, people of color, and transgender people.

According to the 2021 Maine Transgender Community Survey, only 30% of transgender Mainers have a government-issued photo ID that correctly lists their name and gender marker.¹ For transgender people, identity documents are often a source of difficulty, as presenting identification that does not reflect one's gender identity can be a trigger for harassment and discrimination.² Even when anti-transgender bias is not specifically at play, a perceived mismatch between a person and the information on the ID they present can lead to greater scrutiny at polling places – in fact, states with voter ID requirements are statistically associated with more frequent denial of access to voting for transgender people.³ Further, the process of updating one's documentation can be daunting, burdensome, and costly – and since the State Department suspended its policy of recognizing transgender, intersex, and nonbinary identities on passports, it is currently not even possible to update the gender marker on one's travel documents.

We urge you to vote "Ought Not To Pass" on any attempts to require photographic identification for voting. Voter ID laws lead to considerable burdens for Mainers trying to exercise their most fundamental constitutional right and ultimately prevent eligible voters from casting their ballot.

Thank you,

Heide Lester (they/them)

¹ Overton, Penelope. "Lawmakers Consider Bill Requiring Maine Voters to Show Photo ID at Polls." *Press Herald*, 6 Feb. 2023, pressherald.com/2023/02/06/lawmakers-consider-bill-requiring-maine-voters-to-show-photo-id-at-polls/.

² Cray, Andrew, and Jack Harrison. "ID Accurately Reflecting One's Gender Identity Is a Human Right." *Center for American Progress*, americanprogress.org/article/id-accurately-reflecting-ones-gender-identity-is-a-human-right/.

³ Herman, Jody, et al. "The Potential Impact of Voter Identification Laws on Transgender Voters in the 2024 General Election." *The Williams Institute*, UCLA School of Law, 2024, williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Voter-ID-Sep-2024.pdf