



May 1, 2025

Re: LD 1149

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

Mainers For Modern Elections would like to share our opposition to LD 1149. We encourage you to vote ought not to pass and allow Maine voters to reject this attack on our secure election system.

Mainers for Modern Elections is a non-partisan coalition of advocacy groups that believes a functioning democracy requires easy access to the ballot for eligible voters, especially from marginalized voting populations; strong voter protections; and confidence in a secure, modern, representative, and well-resourced elections system. The coalition advocates for statutorily protected voting rights, structural democracy reforms that expand voter access, and investment in and modernization of election administration and implementation. We pursue these policies through direct and grassroots advocacy and by educating and providing resources to public officials and coalition members.

LD 1149 is a poorly written, catch-everything bill that would dismantle trusted and secure systems on which Maine citizens have long depended to securely and conveniently cast their ballots. Maine voters should be given the opportunity to reject this out-of-state, cookie-cutter policy that does not align with Maine election laws or Maine values.

LD 1149 dismantles important election programs and adds new burdens to voting, making election administration more burdensome and expensive for towns, all without making elections any more secure. To start, it would eliminate the ongoing absentee voting program that the legislature passed in 2022. This committee supported the program, which allows for seniors and those with a disability to have a simplified process to cast their ballot removing barriers they face year over year. Next, this bill imposes nearly impossible requirements on towns that choose to provide secure ballot drop boxes for their voters. The bill adds restrictions that would prevent trusted family members from returning a loved one's absentee ballot if the voter is unable to return it themselves. It prevents voters from requesting an absentee ballot by phone and blocks towns from choosing to provide return postage on absentee ballots.

Maine's elections are administered by town clerks who are trusted community members. I suspect that many of us here today know our town clerks by name, and they know their citizens. These professionals have come before this committee advocating for the ongoing absentee voting program to allow them to

build efficiencies in their offices. LD 1149 rejects these requests, creating unnecessary extra work for these professionals.

Mainers for Modern Elections has long advocated for ways to make our elections more secure without limiting eligible voters' ability to cast their ballot in the way they choose. In the past, we have worked with this committee to expand post-election audits, enroll in data security programs like Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), and ensure that state and local officials have the funding they need to effectively and safely conduct our elections. If the proponents of this law truly care about election security, we call on them to focus their efforts there instead of making it harder for eligible seniors, rural voters, and students to vote absentee.

LD 1149 is a sweeping bill that creates confusion for election administrators, adds unnecessary barriers for some of our most vulnerable citizens, and is not a good fit for Maine. We encourage you to vote ought not to pass and allow this bill to be rejected by Maine voters in November.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Members of the Mainers for Modern Elections Coalition include:

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[AARP of Maine](#)

[Center for Secure and Modern Elections](#)

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