



Maine County Commissioners Association

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LD 53, An Act to Establish the November General Election Day as a State Holiday

February 10, 2025

Chair Baldacci, Chair Salisbury, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as a member of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as chair of the legislative policy committee of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee *neither for nor against* LD 53. While we take no position on whether the bill ought to pass, we write to note the impact additional state holidays have on collective bargaining agreements, county budgets, and ultimately local property taxpayers.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta, represents all 16 of Maine's counties, and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

What does LD 53 do? As originally drafted, LD 53 designates the day of the November general election as a state holiday and closes all nonessential state offices.

Discussion. Our association takes no position on whether Maine should establish a state holiday on the November general election day. There are arguments on either side. However, if the state does create this new holiday, it should consider other impacts on employers, including employers who are government entities like county government. Of particular relevance for county government is that most collective bargaining agreements¹ for county employees contain special holiday and overtime pay provisions for any holiday designated by the state. In many cases, holiday pay is double time. When these agreements were formed, they contemplated a particular list of known holidays. Adding a new holiday would change the number of days employees are expected to work, and for employees who must work, they would receive higher pay at a cost to local property taxpayers. The likelihood that a county employee would need to work on a holiday is high because county government provides many essential public safety services like sheriff patrol, emergency management services, and the operation of county jails. These functions must operate 24/7, 365 days per year.

Sponsor amendment. We understand that the sponsor of this bill plans to introduce an amendment that would replace the bill. The amendment would create a "school" holiday on election day as opposed to creating a "state holiday." As with the original bill, we take no position on this proposal but would reiterate the concerns we noted above regarding the potential impact on collective bargaining agreements which may or may not recognize the difference between classifications of state holidays.

¹ Copies of various CBAs can be found on the State's website: <https://www.maine.gov/mlrb/resources/collective-bargaining-agreements>

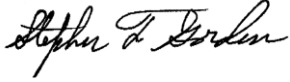
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Conclusion. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill, and we urge the committee to consider the financial impacts on state and local government employers – and taxpayers – when considering whether to adopt this bill. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Gorden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stephen Gorden

Chair, Legislative Policy Committee, MCCA

cc: Commissioner Andre Cushing, President, MCCA
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel