



# TOWN OF MINOT

329 Woodman Hill Road  
Minot, Maine 04258-0329

Tel: 1-207-345-3305

Fax: 1-207-346-0924

Date: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

To: Senator Ned Claxton, Senate Chair  
Representative Laurel Libby, House Chair  
And members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Sara A. Farris  
Town of Minot  
Town Clerk/ Tax Collector/ Voter Registrar

Re: LD 208 – An Act to Expand Access to Absentee Ballots

Position: Oppose

There are three main parts of this bill. I will voice my concerns for each part separately.

**Part 1)** Lines 10 and 11 - To delete/repeal Title 21-A, Section 753-B, subsection 2 D of the current law. This change would eliminate the three-day deadline for any voter to request an absentee ballot and allow voters to request absentee ballots up until 7:59pm on election night.

Allowing people to request an absentee ballot up until 7:59pm on election night will create so much more work for the Clerks and Deputy Clerks on election day. In Minot, I am also the Voter Registrar. Even with my Deputy helping me it would be near impossible to do the clerk/ registrar's job of overseeing the election and allowing people to register to vote with the addition of requesting absentee ballots.

Residents can request an absentee ballot 3 months before an election and we can start mailing them out a month before, I believe that is plenty of time to vote absentee. The law also allows for special circumstance absentee voting in the case of an unsuspected issue where you can not vote in person and need to vote absentee.

Those days without absentee voting are VITAL to election day set up for clerks, especially with all the extra precautions from COVID. The change in the law for 11/3/2020 made election set up very difficult and stressful for me. I had to work late on 11/2 and come in early on 11/3 to make sure everything was in order.

**Part 2)** Lines 14 - 17 - Would allow a third-party runner to return a voter's absentee ballot by 8pm on election night rather than within 2 business days of the date the Clerk issued the ballot to them.

We do not deal with 3<sup>rd</sup> party absentees much in Minot. I can imagine the 2-business day deadline ensures that the ballot is not lost or tampered with. I think the deadline as it prevents "fraud" and human error.

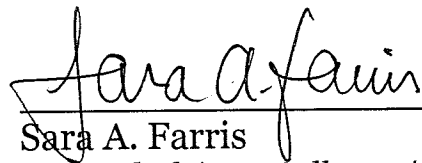
**Part 3)** Lines 22 and 23 - Would allow any voter to vote by absentee ballot in the presence of the Clerk at any time up until 8pm on election day at any election. This change being to allow in-person absentee voting on election day.

This one is very simple, if residents can come to the polling place on election day to absentee vote there is no reason why they cannot vote in person. This will just create more unnecessary work and stress for election workers/ officials. Small offices like Minot do not have the resources or staff to make election day absentee voting work.

During COVID time Minot must shut down the clerk's office to allow for 6ft distancing and easy traffic flow.

In my opinion LD 208 would ultimately add more work and stress on Town and City Clerk's in Maine on an already stressful time. Elections take a lot of preparation and when that preparation time is taken away it will take a toll on us all. I believe Minot residents and all Maine residents have every opportunity to vote with the way the law is written now, so why change it.

Thank you for considering my concerns about LD 208. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any of the methods listed below.



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Sara A. Farris

*Town Clerk/ Tax Collector/ Voter Registrar*

*207-345-3305*

*clerk@minotme.org*